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# The **P**ALIMPSEST

JANUARY 1922

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT IOWA CITY BY  
THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

The PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

*Superintendent*

## THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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PRICE—10c per copy: \$1 per year: free to members of Society  
ADDRESS—The State Historical Society Iowa City Iowa

# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN C. PARISH

ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

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VOL. III

ISSUED IN JANUARY 1922

NO. 1

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## The M. and M. Railroad

Long years before actual railroad construction began in Iowa the people of the State talked and dreamed of a day when their villages would be bound together by steel pathways for the iron horse. As early as 1837 John Plumbe, Jr., of Dubuque, was urging the practicability of a transcontinental railroad; in the forties while rails were being laid in the Eastern States, the topic of steam transportation in Iowa was one of frequent discussion in the villages west of the Mississippi River; but it remained for the decade of the fifties to bring the fruition of all these hopes.

The laws of Iowa for 1850 are filled with acts "to grant the right of way." These grants were made to such companies as the Lyons Iowa Central Rail Road Company, the Davenport and Iowa City Rail Road Company, the Camanche and Council Bluffs Rail Road Company, the Iowa Western Rail Road Company, the Dubuque and Keokuk Rail Road Com-

pany, North, the Junction Rail Road Company, and the Dubuque and Keokuk Rail Road Company, South. The organization of these companies and the granting of right of way clearly show the crystalizing of interest among the people. Many of the companies, however, proved to be only dreams, or they merited the description of the Philadelphia, Fort Wayne and Platte Valley Air Line road: "It was an 'air line'—hot air. It so exhausted the corporation to write the whole name, no energy or breath was left to build the road."

But the people were not to be discouraged, nor were the officials. Governor Stephen Hempstead in his message to the General Assembly in 1852 suggested that "In consequence of the failure of Congress, at its last session, to make a donation of land for the construction of railroads in this State, it would seem to be advisable to again urge this subject upon their consideration". Mr. Lyman Dillon in December of that year introduced into the House "A joint memorial to the Congress of the United States, asking a grant of land to aid in the construction of a railroad from the termination of the Illinois Central Railroad on the Mississippi river at Dubuque, to a point on the Missouri river, at or near Kanešville, in the county of Pottawattamie, by the way of Fort Desmoines." And a few days later the Senate passed a "memorial and joint resolution on the subject of a grant of land to aid in the construction of a railroad from Davenport via Muscatine to the Council Bluffs".

The people of Iowa had become determined to have a railroad, and early in January, 1853, a company was organized which was to make the first attempt in railroad work which resulted in any permanent structure. This pioneer organization, the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Company, had as members such men as John B. Jarvis, Joseph E. Sheffield, Henry Farnam, John M. Wilson, N. B. Judd, Ebenezer Cook, James Grant, John P. Cook and Hiram Price. The company, as organized under the general laws of Iowa, had a capital stock of six million dollars, of shares of one hundred dollars each; and the corporation was to continue for a period of fifty years. At the first election, which was held in May, 1853, John A. Dix of New York was elected President; Ebenezer Cook, Vice President; John E. Henry, Secretary; A. C. Flagg, Treasurer; and Ebenezer Cook, Assistant Treasurer.

The purpose of the company was to construct lines of railroad across the State, embracing three divisions. The main division was to extend from Davenport westward across the State as a projection of the Chicago and Rock Island then terminating at Rock Island, Illinois. The *Washington Press* remarked: "This road . . . will be to Iowa something what the Illinois Central is to Illinois, but built, as a matter of course, under less favorable auspices to its projectors." It was suggested that the main line from Davenport pass through one corner of Muscatine into Cedar County

to Iowa City — a distance of fifty-five miles, and from here still westward through Iowa, Poweshiek, and Jasper counties to Fort Des Moines on the river of that name. From Fort Des Moines it was to pass through the south end of Dallas, and the north end of Adair, Cass, and Pottawattamie counties, ending perhaps at the “Bluff City” a few miles below and two miles back from the river, directly opposite Omaha City in Nebraska. The distance from Iowa City to Fort Des Moines to be covered by this railroad was one hundred and twenty miles, from Fort Des Moines to Council Bluffs one hundred and thirty-six — making the total from Rock Island to Council Bluffs three hundred and eleven miles, and the cost was estimated at nine million dollars.

In May of 1853 William Penn Clarke and Le Grand Byington were sent from Iowa City to a meeting of the proposed Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Company. They were instructed to subscribe stock in the company, if called upon, payable in bonds of the city to be issued by the City Council, and in case a company was formed, to cast a vote in the name of the city provided Iowa City was made a point on the road.

There was much opposition to the plan from the people of Muscatine who were endeavoring to secure a road from Davenport to Muscatine and from thence west to Oskaloosa. Feeling over the proposal ran high and is well expressed in a cartoon of the time drawn by George Yewell and at present in



possession of the State Historical Society of Iowa. It is entitled the "Muscatine Opposition" and pictures the Muscatine element astride a bull which is charging the oncoming locomotive. One of the riders is playing a "railroad overture" upon a flute-like instrument while the other proclaims: "If we fail in this, we declare everlasting hostility towards Iowa City and all therein." A compromise was finally effected whereby a branch known as the Muscatine and Oskaloosa Division was to extend from Wilton Junction (twenty-six miles from Davenport), through Muscatine on the Mississippi thirty miles below Davenport and then westwardly or south-westwardly by way of Oskaloosa to the Missouri River, to the State line of Missouri, or to both. A third branch was to extend from Muscatine to Cedar Rapids and from thence northwestwardly to Minnesota.

On the first of September in 1853, ground was broken for the building of the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad. This event is well described in Barrows's *History of Scott County, Iowa*:

It was a day full of interest to the people of Davenport. Many of the old citizens, who had for years been living on in hope and confidence, now began to feel all their most sanguine wishes gratified. The Rock Island and Chicago Road was near completion, and the first locomotive was soon expected to stand upon the banks of the Mississippi river, sending its shrill whistle across the mighty stream, and longing for its westward flight across the prairies of

Iowa. The occasion was one of universal rejoicing. A great and important object had been accomplished for our city, our county and our State. As Mr. Le Claire, who was selected to perform the ceremony of removing the first ground, came forward, pulling off his coat and taking the wheel-barrow and spade, he was greeted by a most tremendous and hearty cheer.

The year 1854 meant perhaps even more than any previous year to the people of Iowa. The stage had been set and in this year great events happened. A railroad through Iowa without easy and definite connection with the roads in Illinois would be an unpardonable blunder. Realizing this the people of Iowa had welcomed the act of January 17, 1853, entitled, "An Act to incorporate a Bridge Company by the title therein named". The Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Company immediately entered into an agreement with this bridge company for the purpose of connecting the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad at Rock Island, Illinois, with the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad at Davenport, Iowa. Now in the spring of 1854 the people of Iowa were to receive some visible evidence of the previous year's activities. The work of location and construction was begun in earnest under Henry Farnam as Chief Engineer and John B. Jarvis as Consulting Engineer and in the early fall the corner stone of the first pier was laid in the presence of a large number of citizens. The bridge was one thousand five hundred and eighty feet long and thirty feet high across

the Mississippi River from the west bank to the Island, and four hundred and fifty feet long across the slough from the Island to the Illinois shore. The entire cost of both bridges and the railroad connecting them across the Island was approximately four hundred thousand dollars.

This led the way for other important events. During the fall of 1853 and the following winter Peter A. Dey, with the assistance of Grenville M. Dodge, had surveyed a line across the State from Davenport to Council Bluffs along the line suggested. Their plan was in the main adopted for use in final construction. On the twenty-second of February, 1854, the long contemplated railroad from Chicago to Rock Island was completed and in May came another event — the first rail was laid in Iowa, at or near the high water mark on the bank of the Mississippi, in the city of Davenport.

When the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad line was thus located, the surrounding land became valuable and was sought after with a perfect mania. A note of ridicule, or of jealousy, is found once in a while in this connection. A Louisa County historian quotes from a Wapello newspaper of 1854 the following bit of satire:

Hurrah for the Muscatine and Oskaloosa Railroad! From a gentleman who has just returned from Muscatine we learn that work has actually commenced upon that much talked of road. He states that one boss and two hands are actually engaged upon the work. Should they prove to be

industrious and energetic it is confidently expected that the road will reach the Iowa River some time during the present century.

Even the laying of the track, however, was not to conclude the happenings of this memorable year. In July, 1854, that which had previously been thought impossible happened: the first locomotive in Iowa landed at Davenport. It was promptly called the Antoine Le Claire by the enthusiastic citizens.

The next two years were busy ones for the people of Iowa but their labors were well repaid. As the year 1855 drew to a close the railroad was rapidly approaching Iowa City. The people became greatly interested and decided that the track should be complete to the depot grounds before the first of January. Hard labor, long hours, and extra help did much toward accomplishing their purpose but the evening of December thirty-first arrived and the track was still some distance from the depot grounds. Then it was that the citizens working by the light of lanterns and bonfires, regardless of the cold, combined their efforts and reached their goal. At midnight the track was completed so that "the year 1856 and the first train came in on the same day." A formal celebration took place two days later.

While the people of Iowa City were looking forward to the completion of the first section of the railroad the people of Davenport were eager for the completion of the bridge. Their hope was realized early in April. That they were proud of their bridge

no one can doubt. It was a matter of interest for the entire State as an article from an Iowa City paper indicates.

**HO! FOR THE MISSISSIPPI BRIDGE.**— On and after Monday, April 14th, all trains leaving this city will cross the Mississippi at Davenport upon the Railroad Bridge! According to the new arrangement, two passenger and one freight train with passenger cars attached, will leave and arrive at this city, daily: the first passenger train leaving at 6:45 A. M. until further notice.

Congress had steadily refused during the past eight years to heed the numerous resolutions and memorials passed by the legislature asking for grants of land for the construction of a road from Davenport to Council Bluffs. Railroads through Iowa now seemed assured whether given aid by Congress or not, and fearing the loss of the opportunity to do what it knew to be its duty Congress hastened to pass an act on May 15, 1856, granting land for the purpose of constructing railroads in this State. A special session of the General Assembly was convened at Iowa City early in July, and on the fourteenth an act was approved accepting the grant and regranting the lands to the railroads on certain specified conditions. The Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Company was granted seven hundred and seventy-four thousand acres but was authorized "to transfer and assign all or any part of the grant to any other company or person, 'if in the opinion of

said company, the construction of said railroad across the state of Iowa would be thereby sooner and more satisfactorily completed.' ”

The people of Iowa now looked forward to a rapid development of their railroads. This hope was reflected in the newspapers of the time. One such article from the *Washington Press* reads as follows :

The passage of the Iowa Land Bill will have many and important effects, both upon the interests of our own State, and other contingent interests. In the first place, it will place the railroad system of Iowa upon a secure basis, which will ensure its early and speedy completion, thus opening up avenues of trade for the increasing demands of our commerce, and developing yet more fully the vast agricultural resources of our young and growing State. . . . the Muscatine and Oskaloosa road will indirectly receive a share of its benefits, for it is a branch of the Mississippi and Missouri road, and built by the same company. Hence, the funds thus placed at the disposal of that company, although to be applied exclusively to the other branch, will enable it to apply other funds at its disposal to the prosecution of the Muscatine and Oskaloosa branch.

Another article leads one to believe with greater certainty that the wishes of the people are to be realized and that the railroad is to be extended. It reads: “Mr. J. V. Judd and other gentlemen connected with the M. & M. R. R., are now on a tour of examination of the route hence to Oskaloosa, with the intention — we believe — of putting the entire road under contract forthwith”. This first appeared



in the *Muscatine Journal* and was copied in the *Washington Press*.

And it was more than newspaper talk, for on July 23, 1856, there appeared in the *Washington Press* a call for workers: "Messrs. Dort & Butterfield want 500 men to work on their contract on the M. & M. Railroad, between Cedar and Iowa Rivers. Wages \$1,25 per day". To this advertisement was attached the observation: "From the above it will be seen that the Muscatine and Oskaloosa Road is being prosecuted with a good deal of vigor, and we think our citizens need have no fears, if they vote the \$50,000 proposed next Monday, but that we shall have a Rail Road within the time prescribed in the proposition."

Another paper of the time has the following rather extensive time-table for the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad:

On and after Monday, June 1st, 1857, and until further notice, trains will leave Iowa City daily, for Muscatine, Davenport, Rock Island and Chicago (Sunday excepted) as follows:

1st — Freight, and Emigrant, at	5,15 A M
2d — Mail and Passenger, at	6,30 A M
3d — Freight at	11,15 A M
4th — Express at	3,15 P M

Trains arrive at Iowa City daily, Sundays excepted, as follows:

1st — Freight and Emigrant, at	10,50 A M
2d — Mail and Passenger, at	10,25 A M

3d — Freight, at	4,45 P M
4th— Express, at	8,45 P M

Trains arrive at Davenport daily, Sundays excepted, as follows:

The evening train stops one hour at Davenport for supper.

All trains out of Davenport will make connections with Muscatine and Iowa City.

The Passenger Train connects at Davenport with the Rock Island & Chicago Trains. The evening train stops one hour in Davenport for supper.

Passengers are reminded of the necessity of giving distinct direction as to the destination of their baggage — also to procure tickets before taking their seats in the cars.

A. DAY, *Superintendent.*

From these indications one might come to the conclusion that the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Company was in a prosperous condition. In the early fall of 1858 the Muscatine and Oskaloosa branch was completed to Washington; and the opening of this portion of the road was celebrated on September first. A thousand invitations had been issued, and on the appointed day many guests arrived from Muscatine, Iowa City, Davenport and the east on an excursion train. "A train of thirteen passenger cars came in, drawn by the splendid locomotive 'Washington' gaily decorated." A procession from Dutch-creek Township bore a banner with the picture of a locomotive and the inscription: "The Iron Horse shall not rest till he goes farther."

All things, however, were not as bright as they



seemed. Through this pervading spirit of optimism came anxieties and uncertainties. The *Cedar Valley Times* [Cedar Rapids], for instance, prints on June 18, 1857, the following article:

The people of Des Moines are beginning to manifest considerable anxiety respecting their Railroad prospects. They are quite dissatisfied with the slow progress of the M. & M. R. Road towards their city, and are already counting the probabilities of an earlier outlet over the Chicago, Iowa & Nebraska road. The *Iowa State Journal* [Des Moines] in an article upon this subject, says:—"From the appearance the M. & M. Road appears to have entirely abandoned their road between here and Iowa City for the present—throwing all their force upon a 'branch' road—and if their present state of 'masterly inactivity' continues much longer, our citizens will be compelled to look in some other direction. We must and will have railroads—and that soon—and if disappointed in our hopes and expectations by the Company, it will be an easy matter to *reconsider* former acts, and accept the propositions of other roads".

A few days later the following item appeared in the same newspaper:

We see it stated that the Directors of the Road have nearly closed arrangements for a loan of seven millions of dollars, with which in connection with private and public subscriptions along the line, they expect to put the whole road between this city and Council Bluffs, under contract, and complete it to the Missouri River at almost as early a day as has been named for its completion to Des Moines City.

The people along the third branch, which was to extend to Cedar Rapids, became discouraged and embittered about this time because they had been neglected. When in 1857 it was suggested to the city of Davenport that it transfer the \$350,000 loan from this branch road to assist in the extension of the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad, Cedar Rapids replied that the Davenport people would not if they knew what was for their best interest. A connection with Cedar Rapids by railroad they declared would be worth twice as much to Davenport as with two towns like Iowa City.

Under the trying circumstances to which it was subjected this road like all others made slow progress in getting through to Council Bluffs. It was not until the last day of August, 1860, that the Mississippi and Missouri ran its first train of freight over the Iowa River; and in the preceding year the *Davenport Democrat* had announced a decrease in the passenger service by the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Company to one train daily between Davenport and Iowa City. The business on the road would not justify more than one. During the middle of the Civil War period, about 1863, the work was resumed but not very enthusiastically. For several years it was rumored that the railroad would "reach Newton in ninety days" but by 1865 it was completed only as far as Kellogg, forty miles east of Des Moines.

Carelessness, mismanagement, and shortage of

supplies, men, and money because of the Civil War, had created distrust among the people, which the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Company was unable to overcome. Condemnation proceedings were begun by A. O. Patterson, attorney, in October, 1865, and not long after the company went into the hands of a receiver. The foreclosure took place in the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Iowa on May 11, 1866, and soon after the whole line of road to Council Bluffs was purchased by the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Company, which was incorporated in this State a few week previous to the sale.

On the 20th of August, 1866, this company consolidated with the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Company of Illinois. Under the management of the consolidated company the work was rapidly pushed to completion. In the spring of 1869 it became known that the first train over the new road — the third to enter the city — would arrive at Council Bluffs on the 12th of May. On the day set, the citizens “with the fire company, civic societies, band and artillery squad with gun,” gathered at the grounds where a temporary depot had been erected; and as the train pulled in they gave it a hearty welcome.

MILDRED J. SHARP.

## Letters of a Railroad Builder

Isaac Lane Usher came to Iowa in 1853, ahead of the railroads, and located at Muscatine. He learned that the Lyons Iowa Central Railroad Company was constructing an air line from Lyons on the Mississippi River to Iowa City and thence westward across the State, and he and his partner, William H. Thayer, took a contract to build a part of the road near Tipton. Work on this road was commenced in 1853 and was probably the first actual railroad construction in the State of Iowa. But in the following year the company abandoned its operations and the road — which was called the “Calico Road” because of the bolts of calico and other merchandise in which the company partially paid the men who were doing the construction work — was never completed.

Usher and Thayer returned to Muscatine and as proprietors of the “Ogilvie House” carried on a thriving hotel trade. They also took a contract for railroad building on the road from Muscatine to Oskaloosa. In the spring of 1855 Thayer sold out to Usher and not long afterwards Mr. Usher also sold his interests and removed to La Crosse County, Wisconsin, which was his home until his death in 1889. The following extracts of the letters of Mr.

Usher were contributed through the kindness of his son, Ellis B. Usher, of Milwaukee.

THE EDITOR

[To his father]

Muscatine, Iowa, Oct. 16th, 1853.

I have been here two days only and of course can give no very distinct ideas of business matters, but can give impressions gathered from my limited observation, and from conversation with others.

Iowa as yet is quite new, she has a few smart towns on the river, (among which this is one of the smartest) which derive their business directly and indirectly from the agricultural resources of the surrounding country, which are at present quite extensive and daily increasing. These river towns have not only the advantage of the trade thus received, which is equal to cash, but they manufacture and get pay for the labor. They have two large flour mills running night and day, making about three hundred barrels of flour of the best quality, every twenty-four hours. They have steam mills here for making the flour barrels, that make them very fast indeed. They have also two large steam saw mills that saw about 20,000 feet per day. Connected with them are lathe, shingle, and planing mills. They get their pine logs from up river 300 or 400 miles, and raft them down the river. One thousand feet of common boards are worth here about \$12. per thousand, and better qualities range from that to \$25.

Shingles are worth here \$3.50, and lathes, from \$2.50 to \$3.00.

I think that with the exception of California, which is an exception to all rules, Iowa is at present settling faster than any state in the Union has ever been settled, and with a better class. Emigrants are coming here from Ohio by hundreds every day — regular old farmers, just the men to develop this country. As a general thing they are men who emigrated to Ohio several years ago, without means, and located their 80 or 100 acres of land, which they can now sell for \$40. or \$50. per acre, according to location. They are energetic and industrious, and have the money.

Land in this town is worth from \$100 to \$125 per front foot in the business portion of the town. One mile out, good locations for farms are worth from \$15. to \$25. per acre. From four to five miles out it is worth from \$4.00 to \$10. per acre, a great inequality, as you will at once perceive. The land in town will not go down and the land out of town must advance; it is in fact, advancing from 12% to 25% every month, and in many cases 100%, and will continue to do so as long as emigration continues to flow in as at present.

You can let any quantity of money here at 25%, with ample security. A man told me yesterday that he wanted about \$2,500. to locate some land with, in Cedar county, the county just back from this, and if anybody will locate it and give him a bond for a



deed, he will give them a 25% advance with security on the land and also on 4,000 acres which he owns, besides. He is a Mr. Tuefts, formerly of Maine, the eastern part. He left Maine when he was twenty-one, and has lived in Ohio most of the time, until this summer, when he came here as mail agent at \$100. per month. He has invested all his spare means in land here and intends to settle about five miles from town, when he has bought land enough for three farms for himself and two boys, and the land he wants the money to secure is for some of his Ohio neighbors, who intend to emigrate here next year, and he is afraid someone else will get it before they can sell where they are and secure it.

I rode twenty miles into the country yesterday, horse back, with Mr. Tuefts and another man. Most of the country in this section is rolling prairie, and as beautiful as nature could make it, with here and there an oak opening to supply wood and fencing timber, and the soil is as good as any in the world, and the climate as healthy.

The site of this town is very rough, a succession of hills and valleys, requiring a great deal of grading and filling up to make it as it should be. The reason why it was chosen is that the river here makes a large elbow, and this town is built on the outer point of the elbow, thus securing a larger extent of country, the trade of which can reach this point and can't be turned off from it. The town getting the best location of course gets the most

trade. The great rival of this place is Davenport, thirty miles above. It is the most beautiful western town I have seen and about the size of this (about 5000 inhabitants) but they don't at present do half the business that they do here. But they are building a railroad from Davenport to Iowa City which will give them the advantage until they build one from here, which they probably will do as soon as next year.

To give you an idea of the emigration here; there are more emigrant wagons than the ferry boat can take across the river in the day time; sometimes there are fifteen or twenty wagons waiting on the eastern shore to come across, and when I rode out yesterday, I met fifteen wagons going a distance of five miles, on the main road, that came into the state in another direction. This is what you see at our point.

The society here I should judge is very good indeed. I have a very nice boarding house; much better than I expected to find. It is better than most eastern boarding houses. The price is two dollars and twenty-five cents per week. Everything to make us comfortable and happy.

[To his wife]

Muscatine, Iowa, Oct. 27th, 1853.

I think now I shall leave here next week for Tipton, an inland town about twenty-five miles



west<sup>1</sup> of this, where we expect a contract on a railroad upon quite advantageous terms. We have had the offer of as much work as we can do or get done, at so much a yard according to the distance we have to haul it, and we are not bound, only to do the best we can, and they guarantee us not to lose. We shall have to furnish hardly anything. We can get men to build the camp for the sake of getting the boarders, and we shall get our pay without doubt every month. The other contractors told me they always had got theirs just at the time agreed. This road is to run from Lyons in Clinton County to Iowa City, a distance of 75 miles, and they intend to have it finished by next fall at this time. The same company is intending to build another road, from this place to Iowa City, and from thence to Cedar Rapids, in Linn County, and we expect to get the thirty miles from this place to Iowa City to build.

[To his father]

Tipton, Iowa, November 10, 1853.

We have taken a contract on the Lyons Iowa Central Railroad, of two miles, near this place. The work on it will amount to about \$30,000. We have 15 cents per yard for all earth hauled less than fifty rods and 20 cents for all hauled over that distance. There are no rocks or trees in the way, and after breaking the surface there is no difficulty in shovel-

<sup>1</sup> Tipton is about this distance north, instead of west, of Muscatine.

ing it without any plowing or picking. By our contract we are paid once a month, our whole estimate, the company reserving the right to take the work off our hands whenever in the opinion of the chief engineer we are not likely to complete it in the given time. The time given is the first of June, 1854. We have not had to buy anything to commence with but a lot of shovels. We found men here to build the shanties for the sake of the boarders, and the farmers have plenty of teams that they are anxious to work at reasonable prices.

We pay \$2 per day for two horses and driver, they boarding themselves and receiving their pay when we receive ours. We pay the same for one yoke of oxen and cart. Scrapers, plows, and wheelbarrows the company lends us whenever we want them.

I think, judging from the rates they pay in the East, we cannot fail to make some money out of it.

The same company wants us to build thirty miles of railroad from Muscatine to Iowa City, commencing as early as practicable in the spring.

They gave us all we asked for this job, and if they do the same with the other, we shall take it.

Thayer understands his business as very few of the contractors here do.

The company has a nice office here which they have given us the use of, with a nice stove, desk, and furniture, and wood enough to last a month or two. They come to do business in it once a month when they pay off their hands.

The company wants to hire me to keep their books at this point and would probably give about \$30 per month for it. It will work me a little too hard as I shall have to do most all of it evenings, but I guess I shall try it. I have been for the last two days fixing up their books for a settlement which comes off tomorrow. They have about 200 hands to pay off here.

We board at a hotel here for \$2 a week, a first-rate table, but the house is so full all the time that I expect we shall have to put a bed in the office. There are three hotels in town and all full every night.

[To his wife]

Tipton, Iowa, Nov. 16, 1853.

The railroad company has had some trouble with the Tipton people about their stock book. Some of the subscribers erased their names from the book because they thought the company had done so much work near this place that they would pass through it anyway, but the company were so indignant at it that they were determined to abandon what they had done and not come to this town, and they could do it and not lose anything, because the route that does not come here is much cheaper to build.

Their old books made them pay only 20 per cent a year, and their subscription was \$28,000. The company now tells them that they must furnish \$50,000, payable 10 per cent. per month, and they will have to do it. They have already raised \$30,000 of it and will undoubtedly get the rest.

The vice president and the man who came with him to pay off have been so busy with that matter that I have had to pay off the hands, here and at Iowa City. I have paid out \$13,000 and go to-day towards Lyons, with the vice president to pay off the rest.

We shall get off \$500 or \$800 worth of work this month, and it will not cost us over one-half. It counts up faster than our other work, and we are doing it to get ahead a little.

[To his wife]

Elk River, Sunday, November 20, 1853.

Wednesday afternoon I started from Tipton along the line of the Lyons, Iowa Central Railroad, in a one horse buggy, in company with Wm. G. Hourn, Esq., over a prairie country, interspersed here and there with a grove of oak timber and watered with several beautiful, clear, running streams. The country is beautifully undulating until you reach within two or three miles of the river, where it becomes quite hilly and broken, and very much more pleasant and beautiful to my eye than the flat country over which we had traveled.

Mr. Hourn is a Kentuckian and his wife also. She is considerably younger than he and has regular Kentucky manners, wants a little in refinement, but is direct and truthful in expression, and has quick perceptions and a high sense of honor. Taken all in all, an agreeable woman.

Mr. Hourn is a smart, or rather sharp, active man, rather loose in detail, but far-seeing and just the man to manage the general business of a railroad in this western country, with somebody to follow and attend to all the details.

The rest of the family consists of a young lady about twenty years old, by his former wife, and three small children, two boys and a girl.

Mr. Hourn has a brother-in-law in business with him by the name of Graves, a near relative of the Graves who killed Cilley of Maine.<sup>2</sup>

[To his brother-in-law]

Muscatine, Iowa, May 8, 1854.

Our business is paying beyond our expectations.<sup>3</sup> We have a perfect rush of travel all the time, filling the beds and frequently the floors full. We have 85 regular family and sometimes as high as 125 arrivals per day. We pack them away like bales of goods and charge them big storage.

We have taken a large contract on a railroad from this place west to Oskaloosa, connecting with the Rock Island road east, to Chicago. The Rock Island road has been opened since I came back, (within a few weeks), and is doing the biggest business of any road in the West. Mr. Farnam, the man who made

<sup>2</sup> In February, 1838, a fatal duel was fought between Graves and Cilley, members of Congress from Kentucky and Maine respectively. Cilley's death created a profound sensation in the country.

<sup>3</sup> By this time Usher had returned to Muscatine and engaged in the hotel business as one of the proprietors of the Ogilvie House.

it, finished it one year before his time, and is running it on his own hook for the one year. He will make money enough for one man.

We have taken the contract under a wealthy firm here, Ogilvie & St. John, and at prices which must net us a large profit. We have 20, 21, and 22 cents a yard for dirt excavation and 75 cents for rock.

Thayer will go onto the road and I shall stay in the hotel.

[To his father]

Muscatine, Iowa, May 12, 1854

We have taken a large contract on the Oskaloosa railroad in connection with Ogilvie & St. John. Ogilvie is the owner of this house. We have got a good contract and have been offered \$12,000 for it. That will be \$3000 each. We shall take it if we can't talk them up higher. We want to get about \$1500 more if we can.

[To his brother-in-law]

Muscatine, Iowa, Sept. 3, 1854.

Corn is worth 20 and 25 cents per bushel. Flour \$6 and \$6.50 a bbl. Beef 6 and 7 cents a pound. Pork 5 and 6 cents. Prairie chickens \$1.50 per dozen. Quail 30 cents per dozen. Turkeys 50 cents each. Tame chickens \$1.50 per dozen. Butter 10 and 12 cents per lb. Milk 4 cents per quart. Potatoes 25 cents per bushel. Peaches \$1.00 per bushel. Tomatoes they will give you all you want. Muskmelons 5 cents. Watermelons 5 and 10 cents.

I have given you the retail prices, so if you want to live, come on.

You can shoot your own game. Just get into a buggy and drive along the road and shoot without getting out.

A man with \$3000 or \$4000 can live easy here by "shaving" short paper at 20 and 30%.

[To his brother-in-law]

Muscatine, Iowa, Dec. 7th, 1854.

We have not settled with the railroad folks yet. Can't tell how we shall come out. Our company makes \$3000 out of it aside from the question of damages. We ask \$10,000 damages and could no doubt get that amount at the end of a law suit. Ogilvie & St. John offer to give us \$3000 and let us out, and run the risk of getting damages. I think we shall take it rather than be bothered with a long law suit.

Business in all departments is good here, though money matters have been very much deranged for the last three months. We take no Indiana bank bills excepting State Bank. No Ohio money excepting State Bank. No Kentucky excepting Northern Bank, and none from banks south of that. How long this situation will last I can't tell, but not long, I think.

[To his father]

Muscatine, Iowa, Jan. 17, 1855.

We have settled our railroad matters with Ogilvie



& St. John. They gave us two Muscatine County bonds, of \$1000 each, 20 years, 10%, and \$800 credit on their books. The bonds are worth \$800 cash now, and are a good investment. They bind themselves to pay all debts, etc. of Ogilvie, St. John, Usher & Thayer. The debts are not much, \$300 or \$400. I thought that as railroad matters stand at present all over the country we were better off to take that clear profit than run the risk of waiting to get more.



## Comment by the Editor

### AN INDIAN PATHWAY

“Finally, on the 25th of June, we perceived on the water’s edge some tracks of men, and a narrow and somewhat beaten path leading to a fine prairie”. Father Marquette, whose words we have just quoted, and Louis Jolliet, his companion, stepped from their canoes to the west bank of the Mississippi; and on that summer day in 1673 white men for the first time trod an Iowa road to an inland town.

For a long time their followers kept to the waterways. Explorers and fur traders relied largely upon the canoe. With the coming of settlers the Ohio and Mississippi route and the Great Lakes route floated thousands of families into the West, and when they came to the far side of the Mississippi they squatted for the most part near the river. Dubuque, Davenport, Burlington, and Keokuk grew and thrived, but the interior prairie land was uninviting and fearsome. Where would they get water and fuel, building material and easy transportation if they did not stay by the wooded streams? When they left the Mississippi, they struck out to the shores of other streams and stopped. They optimistically believed in the navigability of the Des Moines, the Iowa, and the Cedar rivers, and tried to

make these waterways their arteries of trade and travel.

But just as in later years in the West the irrigationist spread his ditches out over the desert and made it fruitful, so the squatters soon began to stretch out lines of communication into the "fine prairies" and where these life-giving streams of transportation penetrated, settlements sprang up and prospered. The crude early roads, crossing the rivers at fords and ferries, gave way to Territorial roads and military roads and bridges across the inland streams. Then came, in many parts of the State, a glowing enthusiasm for "plank roads" and thousands of dollars were spent by enterprising towns on these wooden Appian Ways.

#### RED AND WHITE TRAIL MAKERS

Meantime for a score of years shining rails had been creeping westward, and when they reached the Mississippi at Rock Island in 1854, Iowa towns abandoned themselves to speculative excitement. Intense rivalries sprang up and neighboring towns forgot their friendship and fought for the favor of the railroad companies. They made extraordinary promises and voted huge sums of money, for they knew that the stream of immigration and commerce would nourish the towns along the railroad, and leave dry and withered the roots of the inland settlements.

The ground had already been broken at Davenport

for the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad, and Antoine Le Claire, whose life is an epitome of that romantic early period of Mississippi Valley history, had removed the first shovelful of earth. In his veins ran the blood of American Indians whose moccasined feet had deepened the buffalo traces into human roadways; as interpreter he had brought red men and white together in numerous councils, and had translated Black Hawk's dictated autobiography into English; and he had been one of the men who had helped to found and develop the town of Davenport.

Here was a bit of unconscious pageantry that has seldom been equaled in our history. In Antoine Le Claire the various people of the Valley were symbolized. He was an Indian, master of fourteen Indian languages and spokesman for Black Hawk. In name and by ancestry he was a French Canadian, a fur trader and the son of a fur trader, representative of that race that had explored the rivers of the Mississippi Valley. And he was an American pioneer, a sturdy white settler and the first postmaster of the frontier town of Davenport.

As an Indian he turned the soil of his ancestors' beloved hunting ground for the passage of the white man's railroad. The first locomotive that reached Iowa, after being towed across the Mississippi on a flatboat, was christened with his French Canadian name. And yet it is probable that his townsmen thought little of these relationships, but chose him

to break ground for this great enterprise because he was the leading citizen of their town, the benefactor of their churches and schools, and the most prominent figure in their business adventures.

The line of railroad begun so auspiciously at Davenport in 1853 reached Council Bluffs in 1869, and it was in that same year that the last spike was driven in a continuous line of rails that stretched from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. Since 1853 Iowa has laid approximately ten thousand miles of railroad and the network of rails runs into every county and not many miles distant from every homestead in the State. But with all this progress we can not help a feeling of regret that in the obscurity of two centuries and a half we have lost beyond recall the trace of that "narrow and somewhat beaten path leading to a fine prairie", that early trail by which Marquette and Jolliet came into the land of Iowa.

J. C. P.

# The **PALIMPSEST**

FEBRUARY, 1922

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THE EDITOR

PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT IOWA CITY BY  
**THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA**

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

The PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

*Superintendent*

## THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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PRICE—10c per copy: \$1 per year: free to members of Society  
ADDRESS—The State Historical Society Iowa City Iowa



# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN C. PARISH

ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

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VOL. III

ISSUED IN FEBRUARY 1922

NO. 2

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## Moving the Winnebago

On Wednesday morning, June 8, 1848, when the first flush of dawn appeared over the hills to the east of Fort Atkinson, Iowa, the clear tones of the bugle awoke the sleeping garrison to face the hardest task of their term of enlistment. To James M. Morgan, "Little Red", and his company of Iowa Mounted Volunteers had fallen the duty of escorting the Winnebago with all their belongings to their new home in the Indian country north of the State of Iowa.

Almost two years before, on October 13, 1846, the United States government had completed a treaty with the Winnebago whereby the Indians agreed to relinquish their claims to the Neutral Ground in Iowa and remove to a reservation to be selected by them or their agent in the upper Mississippi region. Soon after the treaty was concluded Henry M. Rice, acting as their agent, chose for the new home of the Winnebago the country lying in the present State of Minnesota between the Watab River on the south,



and the Long Prairie River and the Crow Wing River on the north, a tract of some 1,557,000 acres. The delay in starting, however, was due partly to dissatisfaction among the Indians created by persons whose business would be affected by their removal, and partly by their fear of being drawn into difficulties with the Sioux and the Chippewa who would be their new neighbors.

For weeks before the departure, detachments from Captain Morgan's company had been kept busy bringing back stragglers who tried to avoid the migration by stealing back to Wisconsin. At the same time details from Captain Wiram Knowlton's company from Fort Crawford rounded up bands of Winnebago that had left the reservation for their old hunting grounds in Wisconsin and assembled them at Prairie la Crosse to join the main body en route. Teamsters, wagons, mules, and supplies were brought to Fort Atkinson in preparation for the journey. Arrangements were made for Second Lieutenant Benjamin Fox to move over from Fort Crawford with twenty-five men of Captain Knowlton's company to occupy Fort Atkinson during Morgan's absence; and the day for the departure was set.

On that hot June day the cavalcade moved slowly north from the post on Turkey River, headed for Wabasha's Prairie on the Mississippi. The government had provided 110 wagons with civilian teamsters to haul the Indians, their goods, and supplies

for the trip, while the traders and Mission and Agency folks furnished about 56 more. Four of the supply wagons were hauled by six-mule teams. The Indians, variously estimated from 2100 to 2800, either rode on the 1600 ponies or squatted on the bumpy beds of the army wagons. Squalling papooses rode in "kyaks" or sacks of hides hung over the ponies, helping to swell the volume of sound made by the crawling caravan. Oxen driven by soldiers hauled the two lumbering cannon, and the handful of mounted volunteers, Iowa boys from farm and shop, rode alongside and behind the train, keeping both the Indians and some 143 cattle from wandering away from the route.

In the late afternoon a halt was made for the night. Five hundred tents erected for the accommodation of the Indians and a hundred more for the soldiers, teamsters, and the Agency and Mission people, made a city of canvas on the prairie. Soon, before hundreds of tiny gleaming campfires, troopers and squaws baked dough and roasted meat on sticks while the aroma of boiling coffee rose above the other smells of the camp.

The travel next day afforded no unusual excitement. The creaking wagons moved slowly north, dipping into valleys of lush prairie grass, fording streams, and crawling over bare hills. On the morning of the third day, however, the Indians refused to move until they had buried with appropriate ceremonies one of their number who had died the night

before. Even when the ceremonial dancing and wailing was ended the soldiers had difficulty in getting their charges to start, for many of them wanted to take their belongings and return to their old haunts about the fort and the mission.

Captain Morgan had instructed his men to be ready for an attack or trouble at any time, day or night, and when camp was pitched guards were posted at regular intervals to prevent the Indians from breaking through the lines. One night a bullet whizzed past the sentinel at post number three, and he yelled the alarm, "Post Number Three, C-O-M-E," drawing out the last word in a long wail. The word spread that the Indians were trying to break through the lines and soon the soldiers were in full chase, but Morgan halted them fearing that the shot was a ruse to get the troops away from the camp so that the Indians could plunder the wagons. He ordered the men to lie on their arms until morning holding their horses in readiness for an attack. Daybreak came with no further alarm and after breakfast the Indians started on, the soldiers following.

One afternoon several days later the advance guard noticed that part of the Indian braves who often pushed on ahead of the main caravan had apparently gone over a hill into a ravine off the trail. Supposing that they had turned aside for water, the guard followed their trail and soon came to a spring. After refreshing themselves and watering their

mounts they followed the ravine to the Root River, planning to go down the river bank to regain the main trail. Before they had gone far they saw through the brush across the river a number of Winnebago warriors in hiding, and one of them behind a clump of bushes in the act of shooting something. A shot rang out, and back across the river came splashing a trader urging his horse at full speed, and yelling for help at the top of his voice. Supposing that he had been shot the advance guard jumped their horses into the river, crossed over and caught the fleeing Winnebago. He declared that he did not shoot at the trader, that, in fact, he did not see him until after he had fired. The soldiers turned him loose and soothed the ruffled feelings of the trader with a liberal gift of venison. Afterwards it was learned that the braves had stationed themselves in the brush planning to shoot the first white man to cross the river, and this was to be the signal for a general onslaught. The unexpected appearance of the advance guard from the ravine had frustrated their plans.

At this point a halt was made for five days for the Indians were restless and at first refused to go farther. This stop permitted the soldiers to wash their clothes, to sew on buttons, and to rest their jaded horses, while it allowed the teamsters to mend broken traces and to repair the wagons. On Sunday the Reverend David Lowry preached to the soldiers, teamsters, traders, and Agency folks, dwelling upon

their dangerous position among merciless Indians and their dependence upon Divine Providence.

That night a band of Indians sneaked away and a detachment of soldiers despatched in pursuit took two days to find the runaways and drive them back to camp. After this outbreak the Winnebago travelled along peaceably for several days causing no trouble, although the braves at times would dash madly ahead, then rejoin the train when camping time arrived.

Toward eleven o'clock one night the alarm call rang out from Post Number Four arousing the sleeping soldiers who rushed to the post to assist the guard. He had stopped an Indian who said he was chief Little Hill, and he asked to be conveyed to headquarters for a secret council. At the council he stated that a band of renegade Sioux living on Wabasha's Prairie had entered into a conspiracy with the Winnebago to forbid the passing of the caravan through their land on the ground that the Winnebago were killing all the game of the Sioux. The Winnebago were to pretend to be afraid and to insist on going to the lower end of Wabasha's Prairie, thence up the Mississippi by steamboat. When the caravan had reached the lower end of the Prairie, the Sioux and the Winnebago were to join forces to kill all the whites and appropriate the teams, cattle, government stores, arms, and ammunition. Then they would go back from the river where the Great Father's boys could not find them, form a new tribe and enjoy the spoils of victory.

Captain Morgan decided to send Corporal Thomas Cox with eight men to make their way with all possible haste to the Mississippi and to get word to the commanding officers at Fort Snelling and at Fort Crawford to come at once to the lower end of Wabasha's Prairie with soldiers, cannon, and equipment. The detail was passed through the lines early in the morning and succeeded in eluding the Indians. Ten anxious days passed.

True to Little Hill's warning the Winnebago hunters began to return pretending fear and reporting that the Sioux had ordered them off their hunting grounds and had chased them with murderous intent. Finally a body of Sioux appeared and forbade further advance through their country, ordering the caravan off their land. During the second night after this occurrence, Corporal Cox and his squad returned with the word that Captain Seth Eastman with a company of regulars from Fort Snelling and Captain Wiram Knowlton with his volunteers from Fort Crawford would reinforce Morgan at the Prairie.

When the cavalcade reached the head of the Prairie a high steep bluff blocked the way to the plain below. To lower the wagons required a detail of sixteen men who, under the command of First Lieutenant John H. McKenny, let down each wagon by tying a rope around the rear axle and then taking a turn around a tree near the edge of the bluff. It took all day long to lower the government wagons and at



sunset several wagons belonging to the Agency and Mission people remained at the top. The company had ridden on and gone into camp about five miles away at the foot of Wabasha's Prairie, and when the last government wagon was on its way, Lieutenant McKenny ordered his men to mount and follow. Soon after they started they met Jonathan Fletcher, the Indian Agent, and a trader by the name of Pratt with an order from Captain Morgan for the detail to help them down with their wagons. McKenny replied that his men had worked hard all day without any dinner, that they were now going to have something to eat, and that Fletcher and Pratt might go to h—l with their order. This disobedience of orders might have caused trouble had not difficulties of a more serious nature intervened.

Captain Eastman had already arrived with one nine-pound cannon, sixty northern Sioux, and forty regulars. The soldiers went into camp on the lower end of the prairie, while most of the Indians turned off into a ravine out of sight of the troops. Two of the Winnebago chiefs, Broad-face and Little Hill, did not enter into the conspiracy although some of their men did, and the two chieftains with the remnants of their bands came down the Prairie and camped near the soldiers. Wabasha, the chief of the renegade Sioux, permitted his band to join with the Winnebago, but he himself stayed in his wigwam some four or five miles up the river.

The soldiers posted double guards while they were



waiting for Knowlton to arrive, the Indians meanwhile appearing in small groups on the tops of nearby hills spying on the camp. With the arrival of the contingent from Fort Crawford all hands set to work to prepare for an attack. The steamboat which had brought the troops was tied up to the bank with a full head of steam ready for use. Then the covered wagons were run end to end in a semi-circle enclosing almost an acre, beginning at a point on the river above the boat and swinging back to the river at about the same distance below. The troops barricaded this enclosure by rolling barrels of flour, pork, and beans, against the wagon wheels on the inside, leaving only a small space for entrance. This enclosure they dubbed the "bull pen". Inside were placed the Indians brought by Eastman, and they displayed their fighting spirit by dancing furiously around some small flags stuck in the ground.

When the barricade was finished Captain Eastman sent a detachment of eight cavalymen to the Indians commanding them to come down the Prairie and to proceed peaceably up the river. The latter agreed to come and did not offer to molest the messengers, however, they waited until the troopers had returned almost to the camp, when with shouts and cries that made the hills and dales reëcho with the sound the braves dashed down the Prairie, armed for battle. They were painted beyond recognition, splattered with red, their hair set up on end and colored red as blood.

When they came within range they were ordered to halt, and seeing three bristling cannon with the aprons off, the gunners standing with lighted fuse, the cavalry with carbines loaded and sabers ready, the infantry in line and prepared to fire, the Indians halted in dismay. The chiefs and officers were disposed to settle the difficulty without a fight if possible but many of the braves and soldiers wished to see who was master of the situation. A council was called halfway between the two forces, and here the Indians consented to go on up the river. Thus was the incipient revolt crushed by a stern display of force. The officers turned over a number of beeves as a present to the Indians who would take after one on their ponies and riddle it with bullets until they were stopped by the soldiers.

With the one steamboat, chartered by the government at one hundred dollars per day, and two small barges the soldiers set to work to transport the stores, animals, and Indians up the river. First Captain Eastman and his command were returned to Fort Snelling, then Captain Knowlton and his men were taken down stream to Prairie du Chien. Morgan's men sent boatload after boatload upstream as fast as possible but the Mississippi became so low that the steamboat or barges would run aground on sand bars and the men at Wabasha's Prairie never knew exactly when to have a load ready. Sometimes when one of the boats that made regular trips between St. Louis and St. Paul reached the Prairie,

the soldiers would compel the captain to stop for a load of Indians much to the disgust of the passengers. During the delay at the Prairie the troopers had little to do except to stand guard and to see that the constantly dwindling bands of Indians did not stray away too far. The soldiers celebrated July 4, 1848, by fighting a sham battle in which they fired several rounds of small arms and let the cannon howl a few times. The Indians ran in all directions and hid in the ravines thinking that "Morgan's Braves" were beginning an attack. For amusement the men swam in the Mississippi, or played ball, while the Indians loafed or hunted. A small detachment accompanied each load up the river so that only a handful of soldiers remained to escort the last group.

The encampment had dwindled until only a few goods and part of three tribes of Indians remained. Dandy's band had crossed the river into Wisconsin, Four-Eyes with part of his band had gone about six miles down the river where they camped and Yellow Thunder, becoming disheartened, declared that he was going back home to the burial ground of his fathers, and with the remnant of his followers started home. The "Braves" started after him in a soaking rain, fifteen soldiers against fifty warriors. At nightfall they came upon the band dancing about a camp fire. Late at night, when the tired Indians sank down to sleep exhausted from their violent exertions, the soldiers crept up, surrounded the band,

seized the guns, and removed the locks. The next morning the crestfallen runaways trailed back to the encampment.

Another small detachment brought back Four-Eyes' band and the soldiers made ready to fire the cannon which was the signal agreed upon for Dandy's followers to return. They loaded the cannon on the barge, pushed over to the east bank of the river and fired one shot. The recoil of the piece surged the barge against the steamboat with such force that the men removed the gun to shore. Here they let it roar a few times and the Indians came yelling, some afoot, some on ponies, and others up the river in canoes. The soldiers put the cannon and the Indians on board the steamboat, loaded the ponies on the barge and then steamed back across the river for the camp equipment and supplies. In the afternoon of that day the last load started toward Fort Snelling.

From the hurricane deck the soldiers viewed the desolate appearance of the lower Wabasha where recently stood a small city of tents, and the highly colored battle array. Wabasha's village slipped past, and the boat approached the rocky cliff known as the Maiden's Rock. Twilight came and the steamer plowed its way into Lake Pepin. All night long the spray from the prow splattered over the sleeping men till their blankets were as wet as though they had been dipped in the river. Above the mouth of the St. Croix River the big barge with all the sol-

diers' horses on board except four which were on the small barge, stuck on a sand bar. With difficulty it was worked off and the soldiers whose horses were on it received orders to get on the barge, cut loose from the steamboat, make for the shore and continue their journey by land. The four soldiers whose horses were on the little barge continued the journey on the steamboat. The rest floated the big barge down stream to Hastings where they landed.

From here they rode through rain and mud to St. Paul arriving several hours after the docking of the steamer. The Indians had gone on out of town and so the cavalrymen camped about a mile below the Falls of St. Anthony to await supplies and orders from Captain Morgan. Word came soon that the supplies for the rear guard were on another steamboat stuck on a sand bar twenty miles below St. Paul. The guard received orders to await the coming of the wagons with these supplies, then to overtake the caravan. Two days later two wagons loaded with barrels of flour, pork, and beans from the stranded boat arrived. With plenty to eat, delightful weather, and good health, the men told their longest yarns, sang their best songs, and rested soundly, lulled to sleep by the roar of the Falls of St. Anthony.

The next morning the rear guard set out along the river and followed the Red River trail until they overtook the caravan which had encamped on a beautiful stretch of prairie. Warm were the greetings for a month had elapsed since all had been

together. Here they halted from Friday until Monday, spending Saturday in washing and mending clothes, horse racing, jumping, hunting, fishing, and gambling. Divine service was held on Sunday.

On Monday the march was resumed. Since the caravan was expected to arrive about two months before it finally came, some traders had stationed themselves along the trail supplied with whiskey to sell on the sly to get the loose change of the soldiers as well as the furs from the Indians. One of these traders had a fat pig of about two hundred pounds which he allowed to run at large near his shanty which was hidden in the woods some distance from the road. The pig, hearing the rattling wagons of the caravan, ambled out to see what was happening. The teamsters seeing him chased him under the wagons to the other side of the train. The rear guard saw what was happening and one by one they began to drop out of ranks and to slip into the brush. When the wagon hauling the traps of the rear guard came alongside this spot the boys came out carrying the carcass of a fine fat animal and loaded it into the wagon. As they drew near camp they met a sergeant returning to learn what had happened. To his question as to what was in the wagon, the boys answered "bear meat" as it was not covered. That night officers and men feasted on fresh pork.

At Sauk Rapids a halt was made to hold a council with the Sioux and Chippewa who wanted to hear specifically just how and under what conditions the



Winnebago were to occupy the neutral strip between them. Here assembled the Indian agents and helpers, the Mission officers, the teamsters, the engineers detailed to erect buildings for the Mission and Agency, the cavalry, and thousands of Indians.

An armed guard was thrown around the council grove and the rest of the soldiers mingled with the crowd to maintain order. Fletcher, the Agent, called the meeting to order, a chaplain offered prayer and the Indian chiefs in long speeches presented their views as to what should be the relationship between the tribes. During the second morning of the council a terrific thunder storm broke up the meeting. The wind tore the tents from their fastenings while almost a continuous roar of deafening thunder followed the dazzling flashes of lightning, and the rain came down in torrents. An unusually fierce flash of lightning struck a Winnebago tent and killed seven Indians. This occurrence ended the council temporarily for the Indians took three days to carry out the funeral ceremonies while the soldiers righted the overturned wagons and tents and dried their clothes.

At the close of the pow-wow where the Indians danced, wailed, and chanted while the throbbing drums kept time, the council reconvened. All parties reached an agreement which was announced by the firing of a cannon. The afternoon was spent in a general jollification, Indians and soldiers competing in footraces, wrestling, dancing, and feasting.



From this point Captain Morgan sent out an advance guard to select the best site for the location of the new Mission and Agency buildings while the main train followed. Both the advance guard and the main caravan halted at a favorable place for a camp at the head of the Long Prairie River. The spot was favored by most of the scouts, but some of the traders felt that a better location could be found farther down stream. The scouts, however, saw no place that equalled the head of Long Prairie and so the men staked out the ground for the new buildings. The engineers erected some saw mills to prepare lumber while part of the force built some shacks to house the supplies. Others hunted and fished or gathered huckleberries to add variety to the regular rations of pork, beans, and hardtack. When the buildings were well under way the guard returned to the encampment at Sauk Rapids.

While part of Morgan's command had escorted the caravan to the head of Long Prairie, another part had scoured the country, raiding the whiskey traders and carrying out the agreement of the Sauk Rapids council. One of these groups had made a trip to the Crow Wing River. Here they found a man living in a shanty, but he denied having any whiskey. However, they started a search and in a little place under the bank like a spring house, they found a keg with four or five gallons of liquor in it. One of the soldiers searching along the river bank, saw something that looked like a rope tied to a rock out in the river.

He called the attention of the others to it, then waded out and pulled it up. Tied to the other end of the rope he found a barrel of whiskey, pure stuff bearing the stamp of W. G. Haun who had a distillery near the Mississippi in the northeast corner of Clinton County, Iowa. The trader denied any knowledge of it, but that night he or some Indians stampeded the horses of the soldiers so that they had to shoulder their saddles and start back to camp on foot. Some of their comrades found and returned the horses to the footsore troopers whom they found lying under trees unable to travel further.

At Sauk Rapids the men heard that the Mexican War was over and the main topic of conversation was when would they get out of the service. Their teamsters came through regularly hauling supplies from St. Paul to the new agency site. One evening as the teams came into camp they had new drivers, the old drivers sitting on the load. Speculation ran rife as to what it meant. When the bugle call sounded the line was filled faster than it ever had been before. The command "Attention!" rang out, then the order was read for the troops to return to Fort Atkinson, Iowa, to be discharged. "Boom!" went the cannon and the celebration continued until late at night. The next morning the men received word to wash and mend their clothes in preparation for the return trip. By this time the troop presented a ragged appearance; some of the men were entirely bare-footed; some had lost the knees out of their

trousers, and others had lost the seats. Jackets were torn and out at the elbows. All day was spent in mending.

Reveille, the next morning, received a prompt response for the men were eager to load the wagons and to set out on the return trip. They made rapid progress in piling tents and equipment in the army transports and mounting their horses. Morgan's "Braves" fired a parting salute and started for home.

Just before reaching Fort Snelling the troop halted for a day to wash their belts and scour their equipment preparatory to delivering them up at the Fort the next day. The following morning, marching through the Fort in single file they delivered up their arms and accouterments, then rode out the south side of the Fort, thence to the Mississippi to await a steamboat at a landing. Here, with the horses loaded on a barge, they went on board for the trip down river. One old cook stove on the forward deck proved totally insufficient for use by nearly a hundred men and so when the dinner bell rang several of the soldiers filed in and took seats at the table much to the disgust of the passengers. The steamboat captain remonstrated but the men sat tight. One of the passengers from St. Louis, straightening up and putting his thumbs in the arm-holes of his jacket, asserted that he did not propose to eat with soldiers. At this several troopers started for him and he beat a precipitate retreat but the

interposition of Lieutenant McKenny prevented trouble. He said that the soldiers were as good as he was and that he was good enough to eat with anybody and if they did not stop their fuss and let the soldiers eat he would take possession of the boat and put all the passengers ashore. The soldiers ate at the table.

The steamboat slipped down stream between the foliage-clad banks of the upper Mississippi until McGregor's Landing opposite Prairie du Chien was reached. Here the troops rested for two days and the officers visited at Fort Crawford across the river. From this place the men started on the fifty mile trip along the Military Trail to Fort Atkinson, not in regular formation but each man setting his own pace. As the horses were in poor condition from insufficient food and the hard trip on the barge, the soldiers straggled back to the fort one by one.

Shortly thereafter the Mustering Officer, Major A. S. Hooe, arrived at the Fort and the men prepared to make a hasty departure for home as soon as they were discharged. After breakfast on the morning of September 11, 1848, the company was formed in line on horseback, and as each name was called the Mustering Officer read the charges against the man for supplies purchased at the sutler's store and for equipment lost. When the name of a certain trooper who had returned almost in rags was called, the officer glancing up remarked, "There's nothing against him and not much on him."

When Major Hooe completed the roll call he praised the troops for what they had done, saying that they had gone through hardships and dangers without grumbling and that the name of the company had remained untarnished. He hoped that the men would return home without committing depredations, and there return to work and be good citizens. Both Captain Morgan and Lieutenant McKenny addressed the men expressing thanks for their obedience to orders and the respect shown them during the time they had been in command.

Then the men of Morgan's Company of Iowa Volunteers dispersed to their respective homes, to Burlington, to Dubuque, to Iowa City and other points, there to resume the labor of farm or store, or to practice again their professions. Although the men had not served on the battle fields of Mexico against their country's enemy they had performed honorably and bravely every task assigned them and had escorted successfully a restless band of Indians over a trail more than three hundred miles in length.

BRUCE E. MAHAN

## With the First Iowa Infantry

When the Civil War broke out, Henry O'Connor was a man of forty, already well known in the State of Iowa as a successful lawyer and a popular political orator. He enlisted as a private in Company A of the First Regiment of Iowa Volunteers and served through the three months of active campaigning with that organization in Missouri in the summer of 1861. The letter printed below was written by O'Connor and first appeared in the *Muscatine Weekly Journal* for August 2, 1861. Later it was reprinted in a brief history of the regiment written by O'Connor and published in 1862.

On August 10, 1861, the First Iowa distinguished itself in the battle of Wilson's Creek. Soon thereafter, the three months enlistment period having expired, the regiment was mustered out. Most of the men re-enlisted in other organizations, O'Connor later attaining the grade of major in the Thirty-fifth Iowa Infantry. He resumed his law practice after the war and from 1867 to 1872 he served as Attorney General of the State.—THE EDITOR.

Camp Seigel[Sigel], Green County, Mo.

Ten miles N. W. of Springfield, July 16, 1861.

Friend Mahin: — I am so much of a stranger to the

*Journal* of late, that I scarcely know how to approach it. I am, as you see, very particular in dating my letter, not that there will be anything new to you in what I have to say, but that such of your readers as feel interested in the doings and misdoings of the First Iowa Regiment, may take map in hand and follow us through our long and somewhat tedious march; and perhaps some of them may wish to preserve it. I can vouch for its accuracy — elegance of style of course you cannot expect, when you consider that I am sitting *tailor fashion*, with the tail-board of a wagon across my knees for a writing desk, in a noisy camp of six thousand men, and over two thousand horses and mules — drums beating, fifes squealing, mules braying, horses neighing, men swearing, singing, and doing everything but praying.

We are now encamped near the summit of the Ozark mountains in a beautiful region, and what is still better, surrounded by a warm-hearted, Union-loving people, who are ready and willing to make any sacrifice for our beloved country. The soil is rich but full of lime-stones, which show themselves on the surface of the ground about as thick as onions in Scott county, to the great annoyance of plowmen, and the especial annoyance of us poor devils who have to sleep on them every night. However, I must not get in advance of my story.

We left Keokuk, June 13th, thence to Hannibal by boat, next moving by rail to Macon City, thence to Renick by rail, 30 miles, where we remained one



night, and commenced our march to Boonville. This is the point at which some unfriendly correspondent of the *Gate City* says we took to the woods and got cut off, a statement no less injudicious than erroneous, as I have no doubt it caused many a tear to be shed about our hearth-stones at home. We made the march to Boonville, 58 miles, in two days and three hours, on three meals, and that it was a good one we need no better evidence than Gen. Lyon's expression to Col. Bates, that he knew of no better march even by old regular soldiers. We staid in Camp Cameron at Boonville till the morning of the 3d of July, when, as a part of General Lyon's command, we started on our march for south-western Missouri, to any point where we could lay our hands on the traitor Jackson. We made what is usually denominated forced marches, twenty-four miles a day, except one day, when it poured down a drenching rain on us, we marched 18 miles — the Iowa boys at the head of the column, with mud and water running off them in the shape of a mixture of rain and sweat — company A in the van singing national airs, under the lead of that little nightingale from your office, Emerson Upham, who, by the way, has shown himself to be one of the toughest and best soldiers in the regiment. When we had marched eighteen miles and left the two Missouri regiments forty-five minutes behind, and their men dropping by the road-side by the score, the surgeon of Col. Boernstein's regiment rode in a gallop to the head of the column, and

told the General that unless he halted the column he would kill all the Missouri men. We halted right in the rain. The rain held up in an hour or two; we built a fire, dried our clothes on us, (the best way always to save taking cold,) got our supper of some healthy crackers and good coffee, run round like antelopes, and in the evening to the surprise of every one, and to the terror of the St. Louis boys, we had a skirmish drill. I believe it was at this point that Gen. Lyon, who first called us Gipsies because of our ragged and dirty appearance, christened us the "Iowa Grey Hounds."

At Grand River, in Henry county, we came up with Col. Sturgis' command, consisting of two volunteer regiments from Kansas, five hundred regulars, and four pieces of artillery, which, joined to our force of twenty-five hundred troops, put Gen. Lyon at the head of a column of six thousand, with ten pieces of artillery. Crossing Grand river with such a force of men, wagons and horses on a rickety old ferry boat, was, as you can perceive, a tedious process. It was prosecuted night and day, and the whole column taken over without a single accident to man or beast. We marched from there to the Osage river, at a point ten miles southwest of Osceola. Here, again, we had to go through the disagreeable process of crossing the troops on about the meanest thing in the shape of a ferry boat that I ever saw. But Gen. Lyon was there, and the thing had to go ahead.

Just before starting over the river in the evening, some Union men came into camp and gave information to the General of about eight hundred secessionists being encamped at a point about twelve miles off. Colonel Bates was ordered to detail from his regiment a sufficient force to take them or break them up. Five companies — A, C, D, F and K — were accordingly detailed for that purpose, and got all ready to start, under command of Major Porter, silently, as soon as it was dark; when suddenly, and to the great disappointment of the boys, the order was countermanded. It appeared that a messenger had just arrived from Springfield with the intelligence that Col. Seigel's[Sigel's] command, of about fifteen hundred, were in Springfield surrounded by about eight thousand secessionists, under the lead of Claib Jackson nominally, but Ben. McCulloch really, for Jackson is not fit to lead a blind horse to water. He is a coward as well as a traitor. This news, of course, stirred up the old General, who seemed to feel sure of his game this time, having missed Jackson at Boonville.

We went on with the crossing, and got our regiment over by four o'clock in the morning; no sleep, with orders to march at five; made fires, hurried up our breakfast, swallowed it and started at quarter past five. This was our great march, kept up through a hot sun until three o'clock. We camped, got supper, and at half-past 5, when we were thinking of fixing our beds, the General's bugle sounded a

forward march. Off we started, and after measuring off forty-five miles in twenty-two hours — recollect with the loss of two nights' sleep, and only three hours' rest — we fetched up in a cornfield, on the bank of a pretty stream; corn reeking with heavy dew, ground muddy from recent rains, men shivering, sleepy and hungry. We were ordered to get our breakfasts, what sleep we could, and be ready to march in two hours. Springfield, still thirty-five miles off, must be reached to-night. Of course, in this long march a great many fell back exhausted, but most of our regiment came up within an hour. Many dropped down in the wet and mud and went to sleep; some went to making a fire and stirring round to prevent chilling — myself among the latter. In a little over three hours we had got breakfast, sleep, rest, &c., &c., and were again on our weary, swinging march, but with many sore feet. We thought of nothing, however, but coming up with Jackson, when lo! after we had gone about five miles, the General received the news of Jackson's defeat by Seigel [Sigel], and his subsequent hasty flight. Of course this rendered any more forced marching unnecessary; so after marching a few miles further to a good creek, we encamped for the day, cooked, slept, washed ourselves, our shirts, &c. Next day, Saturday, we marched to this place, where we have rested ever since.

We spend our time very pleasantly. The intervals between drill and parade are spent in looking up

some delicacy in the way of bread, butter, chickens, &c. A good many wagons come into camp with those things, and those of the boys who have not gambled off their money have a little left.

I have given you a rough but faithful sketch of our soldiering for the last four or five weeks. How do you like it? It is better to read of, than to be a part of. Like others, perhaps, you will be astonished to hear that your correspondent stood the march all through without giving out or resorting to the wagons. Pretty fair for a soldier weighing only one hundred pounds. Our officers had not a much better time than the men. Capt. Cummins is a perfect horse to march. It is rumored that he is going to Washington with a view of a commission in the regular army; or, failing in that, to get a company accepted, and then come home and raise it.

George Satterlee is acting Quartermaster, and on that account is very little with the company. He is unusually popular with the regiment, and his business knowledge and habits fit him admirably for the place.

Ben. Beach is, and always has been, a favorite with the company. Always at his place, wherever that is, impartial, modest and kind-hearted, he is seen and felt, but not often heard. He desires to raise a company and stay in the army, if he has a chance. I predict that he will make his mark as a soldier.

Col. Bates has gained very much in favor with his men during this march. He evinced an anxiety for

the comfort of his men which endeared him to them, and he assumes a respectful independence in the presence of his superiors which the citizen-soldier likes to see.

Col. Merritt and Major Porter have always been personally popular with the regiment. We have had none of those disgusting scenes of *whipping, bucking, gagging, &c.*, in our regiment, but we have seen too much of it in the others while at Boonville and here, amongst regulars and volunteers. A great deal of it in the St. Louis regiment. In the first Kansas regiment a young man named Cole was shot on dress parade, for killing a fellow soldier. Four balls entered his body, and one his neck. He died instantly.

In a wayside grocery and gambling shop near the Osage river, two soldiers belonging to the regulars were murdered. The grocery and house were burned by order of the General, and the grocery keeper, who proved to be the murderer of at least one of the men, was taken, tried before the general, convicted, sentenced to be hanged, and is now under guard awaiting execution as soon as the General shall order. He deserves his fate richly. He is an old offender. These are incidents of news.

I had almost forgotten to say a word about Gen. Lyon. A man rather below the middle stature, with no surplus flesh, red hair and whiskers, fast ripening to grey, small blue eye, vigor, energy, fearlessness, and a dogged determination to accomplish his purpose at all hazards, are the prominent traits of his

character. Finish the picture yourself—I must close to get this to Springfield.

We expect to be home about the 20th or 25th of August, and will be glad to see the people whether they will to see us or not.

H.



## Paying the First Iowa

Hiram Price, early leader in the fight for prohibition in Iowa, Member of Congress from 1863 to 1869 and from 1877 to 1881, and Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1881 to 1885, was forty-seven years old at the outbreak of the Civil War and did not enlist; but he gave infinite service to the cause as a civilian both in Iowa and in Congress. The letter printed below reveals an instance of this service. The delivery of the pay to the volunteers of the First Iowa must have been accomplished in the latter part of June or the first of July, 1861. On the third of July the regiment left Boonville for the south and a few weeks later were engaged in their one great battle, that of Wilson's Creek. The original of the letter is in the manuscript collection of Kirkwood Correspondence in the Historical Department at Des Moines, Iowa.—THE EDITOR.

Aug. 13<sup>th</sup>, 1886

Hon. Saml. J. Kirkwood

Dear Sir

I have just read the Davenport Gazette giving an account of the reunion on the 10<sup>th</sup> Inst. I am glad to know that you were there and had a chance to talk to "*the boys*." After the lapse of a

quarter of a century, I have not forgotten how the 1<sup>st</sup> Iowa was recruited, clothed (so far as shoes & blouses were concerned) and fed. I know something about how blankets, quilts & comforts were begged & borrowed in Davenport to fix up quarters in Nicholas Fejervary's block of buildings for the first companies. I have not forgotten how I succeeded (after repeated refusals by other parties whose patriotism did not reach their pockets) in getting Dan. Moore to feed them if I would be *personally* responsible for the payment. I have not forgotten, that Ezekiel Clark and myself, took our own money \$33,000 without any authority of law, or any certainty of ever getting one cent of it back, and travelled to Missouri, to pay the men who had left home & friends to risk their lives in defence of the Union & the old flag. We found the 2<sup>d</sup> Iowa scattered along the R. Road all the way from Hannibal to St. Jo. & paid them their proportion. Then Mr. Clark was compelled to go to New York, leaving me alone to hunt up the 1<sup>st</sup> Iowa. I failed to get across the country to where I *supposed* the regiment was because the Rebels (our Southern Brothers) had possession of the roads and there were more of *them* than of *me*. So my only hope of success was by a flank movement, which required a detour via St. Louis. I succeeded finally by river, rail & foot in reaching Jefferson City, carrying *my* funds (not *Govt.* funds) in an old fashioned Iron bound hand trunk, or satchel, Jefferson City was full of Rebels

& I was an entire Stranger and alone. Col. Boernstien was in command of some troops at that place, with his head quarters in the State House. I called upon him, told him who I was, and that I was hunting the 1<sup>st</sup> Iowa Regt. to pay them some money, but I did not know exactly where the Regt. was, and asked him if he could tell me where to find the Regt. He said he could not tell for certain, but it was up the river in the direction of Booneville. I then asked him, if he thought I could go by waggon safely through the country. His reply was "You get your *throat* cut before you get five miles from here." Then I asked him if he would give me an escort, to which he replied, "I have not men enough to protect myself here." With these *kind* words and this *cheering* outlook I left him. I was armed with a single barrelled pistol about three inches long. I had then about \$22,000 in my hand trunk, because I had only paid the 2<sup>d</sup> Iowa and the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>d</sup> were yet to be paid. I sat up all of that night, (It was nearly night when I left the *hospitable* quarters of Col. Boernstien) with my hand trunk between my feet, and my artillery (3 inch pistol) in position ready to repel an attack of the enemy.

Now you will notice the Col. had refused me any assistance, and had given me the *cheering* assurance that if I attempted to reinforce Genl. Lyon with my money, I would get my *throat* cut. But I got there all the same, and "*the boys*" were glad to see me, and I was more than glad to be able to shed a little sun-

light up [the] dark pathway upon which they had entered. The record of the re-union of the 1<sup>st</sup> Iowa is noticable for the conspicuous manner in which the names of Mr. Clark and the Subscriber are *not mentioned*. While you have money muscle or brains to use for the benefit of the people you amt. to something, but not otherwise —

Very truly &c

H. PRICE

## Comment by the Editor

### LOOKING BACKWARD

Old days, old ways — how quickly we let them slip. Almost pathetically sometimes the older members of the community try to hold them in our remembrance. But we turn from them with little patience and fasten our eyes and attention upon the infinitesimal present, as a speculator scans the quotations on the tape of a stock ticker, engrossed in the ups and downs of the market and indifferent to the fluctuations of the week before.

We detach ourselves from the past and live only in the present. Events lead us by the nose. Conditions of life change and with lightning like facility we adjust ourselves to the new and forget the old. The age of furnaces and motor cars and tiny yards has so captured us that the base-burner and the old gray mare and the wide-doored barn and ample yard and orchard are fast dimming memories. The sight of a patient horse hitched to an old fashioned buggy and standing with drooping head at the curb of a modern street stirs us only as something alien, even though we may have spent many hours as a boy currying just such a horse and greasing the axles of a similar buggy.

The men who drove those once fashionable equipages, who banked the foundations of their houses and perhaps stuffed the window cracks with cotton

to keep out the cold, and emptied hods of rattling coal into the tops of base-burners, are being gathered to their still more ancient fathers. And with them are going those faithful souls who sewed the rag rugs and kept the whatnot dusted, who took the pain of chillblains out of our feet with tubs of cold water and the ache out of our childish hearts with motherly comfort, who patched our trousers worn through with sliding down the shed roof, made batches of doughnuts and cookies of a Saturday morning, and sent us down to the monthly church supper laden with huge warm pots of baked beans and scalloped potatoes.

If the memories of our childhood bind us so little to the past, how quickly will fade from the memory of man the sharpness of detail of the times that are gone. Only from the lips of older men and historians come words that remind us of that which once was; and we are prone to humor and forget the one and find little interest in the other. Sometimes novelists draw us a more or less clear picture of other days, but usually they are kept too busy explaining somewhat bewilderedly, but with no less positiveness and detail, just what our perplexed modern life is driving at.

#### AN HISTORIC SPORT

It is likely that the rather incidental sources of information will be the most illuminating in our study of past conditions — the hurried newspapers,

the personal letters and infrequent diaries, the treasured souvenirs of events, social, religious, and political, the portraits and random photographs of individuals and gatherings, of river fronts and bridges and steamboats, of streets and public squares and old buildings.

Hunting with a camera for historic landmarks is recommended as an outdoor sport. There are no game laws that hinder. In fact the only way to preserve the game is to shoot it. Nor is it prohibited to shoot the young in this kind of sport. The street scenes that seem to us fresh with youth to-day will be historic to-morrow. If every town in the Middle West had a municipal album preserved at the city hall or public library in which were placed views of the infant village at six months and of the growing and changing town at frequent subsequent periods, what an interesting and valuable record we should have.

It is probable that there is not extant in any one place a complete set of views of the buildings which served Iowa, State and Territory, as capitol. Famous inns and taverns and forts have vanished, churches and academies have crumbled and gone, unvisualized except in the minds of those who will soon leave us.

There is game in every county and an open season throughout the year. Let us take down the trusty camera and make the most of the sport.

J. C. P.



# The PALIMPSEST

MARCH, 1922

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT IOWA CITY BY  
THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

The PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

*Superintendent*

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## THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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PRICE—10c per copy: \$1 per year; free to members of Society

ADDRESS—The State Historical Society Iowa City Iowa

# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN C. PARISH

ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

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VOL. III

ISSUED IN MARCH 1922

NO. 3

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## Our First View of Vicksburg

Know ye the land where bloom the citron bowers?

Where the gold-orange lights the dusky grove?

High waves the laurel, there, the myrtle flowers,

And through a still blue heaven the sweet winds rove.

Springtime of 1863! The long-drawn-out Vicksburg campaign was in progress, more stubbornly than ever. Floods along the Mississippi — a deluge, in fact — cut a figure in the matter, on the Louisiana side especially, and often had effect on the movement of troops. The water rose higher than had been known for years. At that period of our country's history (and perhaps now), the difference between high and low water on the lower Mississippi was from twenty-five to fifty feet. One seventh of Louisiana was inundated — a great part of the low country. Swamps, rivers, and bayous overflowed. Our canal operations at Lake Providence and just above Vicksburg had aggravated matters immensely. Guerilla bands and the enemy's cavalry cut dykes

and levees wherever it would do us most harm. Many dangerous crevasses occurred in this way.

Our division of the Seventeenth Army Corps was on reserve, a circumstance we thought humiliating. We tarried on a big plantation twelve miles directly west of Vicksburg.

“Napoleon always put his best troops on reserve — the flower of his army”, an officer told us.

“Rats!” bellowed a cynical sergeant. “We’re keepin’ the lines open to the supply boats above Vicksburg. Lookin’ after the hard tack and ammunition. That’s it, me boy.”

This diagnosis was correct. All we had to do was to keep reasonably near the gun stacks, be ready for anything that might happen, and wait for orders.

It is not entirely unpleasant, however, to be on reserve after you have met the enemy a few times and had an ample draught of the ruddy wine of glory. Afar you hear the rumble of the guns; the clamor and exultation of victory reach you; those of the enemy you see are captives, whose dejection and unhappy situation awake your sympathy. You view the wreck of war, and the boastful signs of triumph. Before you reach a scene of combat the dead have been buried, and most repulsive sights have disappeared. You see war as many a general, historian, or politician sees it.

Much around us awoke admiration. Beautiful groves fringed the glassy bayous. Trees in countless varieties thrived in semi-tropic luxuriance —

the magnolia, ash, pine, holly, cypress, beech, and hickory. Sweet-gum flourished and live oak towered. Everywhere the stately trees were hung with trailing plumes of Spanish moss.

On April 29th tremendous cannonading continued for hours, attracting the attention of all. It seemed a long way down the river. News came that Admiral Porter was bombarding Grand Gulf, and having a great fight there. The next day McPherson crossed the river lower down and moved inland. There was a battle at Port Gibson, the enemy was beaten, and hasty evacuation of Grand Gulf ensued. This left the Union fleet in control of the river from Port Hudson to Vicksburg.

On May 5th a battalion of Confederates trudged by who had been captured three days previously at Port Gibson. It was soon observed that many of them were old friends of ours, having fought against us at Corinth. Captain Williams, who was wounded in that battle, the first day, walked up to one of them and said:

"I believe you are the gentleman who captured me at Corinth."

Mutual recognition and a cordial hand-shake followed, and the Captain handed him a much needed five-dollar bill. We treated them well, gave them what little food we could spare, and assured them that as soon as they got through to the supply boats they would get everything they needed in abundance. A good deal of fun passed back and forth.

“Boys, you’ll never get Vicksburg”, they told us.

“We’ll stack arms on the levee there before summer is over,” we answered — a boast that came true. The unanimous belief in the Union army that Vicksburg would fall was something remarkable.

A tough looking crowd they were, many being barefooted, and all of them in rags. One of them shouted merrily:

“We can’t dress as well as you, boys, but you know we can shoot as well.”

I saw many old men among them who had “seen better days”, an air of refinement not being obliterated by old clothes. The southern Conscription Act respected neither gray hairs or youthful bodies. A day or two afterwards General Sherman rode by at the head of the Fifteenth Army Corps. We hastened out to the roadside to silently greet so famous a leader — one destined, in another year, to command us all on another great field of action.

A detachment of the First Heavy Artillery of the regular army also went by with a battery of siege guns which had helped repulse the foe on Sunday evening at Shiloh, and afterwards, at Corinth, had thundered from Fort Robinet, when a desperate assault was made on that earth work. As a large part of the rebel garrison in Vicksburg — most of it, in fact — consisted of Price’s veterans, it seemed funny to see the same old guns coming so far to trouble them once more. Sixteen strong oxen pulled each gun.



On May 11th our division left the Holmes plantation at sunrise; we marched rapidly; by eight o'clock we had covered ten miles. Crossing a nameless bayou, we stacked arms along the Mississippi River front — below Vicksburg, of course. On account of intense heat we rested in the shade of the groves until four in the afternoon — then marched again. At New Carthage we saw a wooden gunboat which had been very thoroughly peppered with cannon shot in the Grand Gulf engagement. Its guns, machinery, and hull, to all intents and purposes, remained uninjured and ready for battle — an indication of hurried marksmanship by the enemy. A large field hospital at the roadside was filled with sick and wounded. I was sorry to find among these lads a school boy friend of mine who had been shot through the thigh with a musket ball at Port Gibson. A funeral was in progress as we marched away. Innumerable snakes infested every wayside spot, and we killed great numbers of them. Fourteen-foot alligators swam in the bayous. Dismayed by the presence of so many human beings, they fled from one lagoon where hundreds of us went in bathing. A low, flat, hot, swampy country was around us.

“It’s hotter than Hades”, our Major observed.

“Yes, I think it’s hotter than Hell”, an officer answered. Perspiration often penetrated waterproof knapsacks.

All along the route we saw the smoking ruins of splendid plantation homes, costly sugar-houses, cot-



ton gins, warehouses, and enormous barns, for we moved through one of the finest and richest sections of the South, and all this property was being cruelly and uselessly destroyed, in defiance of the rules of civilized warfare. How could we blame Southerners for hating us? This vandalism was perpetrated by the division of troops that marched immediately ahead of us, and was explained on the ground that a large number of those men came from Missouri, Kentucky, and other border States. They justified their conduct on the plea of retaliation. They had received many letters recounting atrocious deeds at their own homes perpetrated by Confederate guerrillas and raiding bands of cavalry. They claimed to be "only fighting the devil with fire".

On the following day our course lay away from the Mississippi, and we marched for fifteen miles along Lake St. Joseph, the opposite side of which was green with vernal woods that rose from the edge of the waters. The lake was a lovely sylvan-flood, and around its fertile shores had been one of the garden spots of Louisiana. Even as we gazed the country to the rear was one vast field of sugar cane and Indian corn, which in the distance resembled the green waves of the sea. Only the day before, expensive homes, sugar mills, and cotton plants of great cost looked out upon the placid lake in proud serenity. Now, where we marched, were smouldering ruins, and for miles ahead we could see smoke and flames wrapping roofs and walls that

towered high. I saw but one white civilian that day. Men, women, and children must have fled to the woods and fields — hidden away. These homes had been sumptuously furnished, several pianos being often seen near one of them. Little plundering was done, scarcely any — almost everything was burnt. Our division commander, that morning, had given orders that any man caught firing property along the route should be immediately “stood up” at the roadside and shot. The troops ahead of us either had full license to burn, or so fierce a determination to do so, that efforts to prevent proved unavailing. The burning went on. This most barbarous spectacle reminded us of what we had read in Gibbon concerning the passage of the Danube by the northern barbarians, whose advance was traced by the blaze of Roman villas. Cruelty has no effect in deciding military operations. Neither has destruction of private property, except in special cases covered by absolute military necessity. The loss inflicted along Lake St. Joseph was enormous. Wrongs perpetrated in Missouri and Kentucky by irresponsible outlaws were wiped out in Louisiana by trained soldiers.

Early the next day we marched eight miles and reached the Mississippi again at Hard Times Landing—a spot that did not belie its name. It gave us a fine view, however, of the captured fortress of Grand Gulf. When we embarked, and rapidly steamed down and across toward it, previous interest was

intensified. Bluffs loomed from the water's brink. A new Vicksburg might have been created there, had not the enemy's plans been frustrated. Everywhere on the sides of precipitous cliffs and lofty hills we saw forts, breastworks, and rifle pits. Only a little more time was needed. In the capture of the place our troops got several brass fieldpieces, five heavy siege guns, two battle flags, and a thousand prisoners. Painted in white on the siege guns was an assertion that Admiral Porter captured them.

Without land forces Grand Gulf might not have been taken in a thousand years. Porter's fleet fought five hours and a half; transports ran the blockade as they had done at Vicksburg; then ferried troops across the river by thousands. At Port Gibson a Confederate army was beaten, and the enemy fled from Grand Gulf that night to avoid capture. Nevertheless the gunboats fought bravely, as they always did.

The day before we reached Grand Gulf the enemy was defeated again at Raymond. McPherson then scattered another force and entered the capital of Mississippi, capturing twenty pieces of artillery. The army was now said to be in the rear of Vicksburg. After we disembarked at Grand Gulf I made a visit to the forts. In one was a large siege gun that no cannonade had been able to silence. The reason was now apparent. On either side of the muzzle of the gun a strong post was deeply set in the ground, to which a negro slave had been chained,

and a Confederate officer had stood near the pair of unfortunates with a drawn revolver, and forced them, under pain of instant death, to load the gun. When a negro was killed, another one took his place. How many perished in this way we had no means of knowing. The officer was finally blown to atoms. I saw the posts, chains, and manacles. Grand Gulf commanded not only the Mississippi River, but also the mouths of Big and Little Black rivers — it dominated three rivers, and was a citadel moulded by Nature's hand.

Our immediate command, the Iowa Brigade, went into bivouac on a sandy flat, suffering from intense heat, and, like the rest, having a wretched time of it. The atmosphere that rose from swamps, rivers, and bayous under a sweltering sun engendered disease among some other troops. Rations were scant. We scarcely had enough to eat, but cheerfulness prevailed, for the situation was known to all. A great campaign was in rapid progress; quick movements outranked everything else. The boats were loaded with rations, above Vicksburg, but the trouble was to get them to us, for moves and changes occurred incessantly. Great numbers of us went bathing in the swollen tides of the Mississippi, which were treacherous and dangerous. One soldier was drowned, being drawn under by the headlong currents. Bathing when over-heated injured many men, and the surgeons tried to stop the practice, but everyone was hot and nobody cared for orders. All

civilians had fled from town. We did not blame them.

On May 14th I wrote: "In the shade of the trees on the heights of Grand Gulf I view the glittering Mississippi, dotted with transports and iron clads. At the foot of the bluff are the rude camps of the soldiers. Strewing the hillside are cannon shot, fragments of shell, bursted or dismounted guns, and the remains of blown-up magazines which had been plated over with railroad iron. Even the monuments of the town cemetery have been shattered by missiles, with two or three graves dug out by solid shot — skeletons, coffins and all. The sun glows as if in the tropics, and, in the distance, all we view is robed in livid green. The woods around are in utmost splendor—in foliage of deepest dye. Like another Egypt, Louisiana lies 'in the midst of its waters'—a land of fertility—of corn, oranges, sugar cane, cotton, rice and tobacco—a land of flowers, fanned by breezes from the Gulf, or from the tropics—a land of prodigious richness, overhung by the double pall of human slavery and civil war. At twelve o'clock last night the drums beat an alarm. Our regiment and another one hurried to the picket line, and performed grand-guard duty till morning. Rifle pits are now being constructed around the rear of the town by the First Mississippi Infantry, which is composed of escaped slaves commanded by white officers promoted from veteran regiments. Thousands of fugitive slaves of both

sexes have poured into Grand Gulf. For the first time without a master, and herded like animals in a long ravine, their demoralization is deplorable. Vice is rampant."

On May 16th I was one of a party of forty detailed to guard a small wagon train on a foraging expedition. Our course lay through a wild and romantic region. The highway was walled on either side by abrupt hills covered by trees in richest robes of green. Vines hid the trunks of trees; tall grass grew till it drooped and lay on the ground; thickets were impassable because of density. The birds, blossoms, flowers, and the aroma of southern Spring aroused admiration. The road at times led along the steep sides of hills, and when we reached a summit, the view of fields, woods, glistening bayous, and wide, baronial plantations, almost banished thoughts of war. The odors of the pear, the orange, and the nectarine, floating from blossoming orchards, filled the breeze with perfume. Everywhere was "fruit, foliage, crag, wood, field and vine." After marching five miles we came to a big plantation and loaded our wagons with corn. No tedious formalities attended the transaction. No money passed, no receipt was given. The owner lost his corn because there were forty of us and only one of him. Not a guerrilla came up to protest against "the good old rule, the simple plan," or fire a shot from copse or jungle. The slaves treated us with lavish hospitality, offering us milk, corn-bread, honey, preserved



fruits, and other foods that seemed to us luxurious. We needed this increase of rations, for each day our stinted fare grew more slender. These black people lived in great abundance as regarded food, and the quality was far better than many northern white people enjoy to-day, but their clothing was utterly worn out. The attire of some of them was unworthy of human beings, but in spite of ragged garments and rawhide shoes, most of them were fat, jolly, and apparently without a care on any subject. Their cabins appeared cosy, clean, and homelike. Not one of them could read, but they thoroughly understood that the war deeply involved their future fate. Their "religious instruction" had been mainly confined to sermons on such texts as these: "And God cursed Ham," "servants obey your masters," etc., etc. By the terms of the Emancipation Proclamation every slave was now free, but the proclamation had little force outside of our military lines. The male slaves of the region we were in all had muskets and ammunition, which they had picked up on adjacent battle fields. On this plantation I conversed with handsome young female slaves that were so nearly Caucasian that they had red cheeks and blue eyes. They were the children of their owner, undoubtedly, and variously called themselves creoles, quadroons, and octoroons — a comment on the "divine institution" of Slavery — that "sum of all villainies". I thought of the conflagrations along Lake St. Joseph, and of the Biblical warning: "I will repay, saith the Lord."



The more intelligent of these girls were gloomy and unhappy. They had little to live for. Without untoward incident we returned to our camps on the Mississippi.

In the middle of the night of May 19th the rattle of drums awoke us. "Fall in for Vicksburg", was the startling cry. Cheers rang among the battle-rent hills of Grand Gulf, and floated far over woods and waters. By the light of the stars the Iowa Brigade embarked on steamers, and moved up that broad and perilous flood. The dark shores teemed with possible dangers. The shots of a single fieldpiece might wreck the whole fleet and drown the expedition. Mines or torpedoes might underlie the tide, or some newly invented implement of war be waiting for experiment. We little appreciated the dangers of that campaign. Few or none of us thought of them. Huddled and crowded together, to a degree intolerable, we found that sleep was impossible. The steamers plodded along cautiously, keeping the middle of the river, and making only about three miles an hour. By sunrise we had got only half way to Warrenton. The bands played gayly and the soldiers cheered. The booming of cannon ahead sounded incessantly. The forenoon wore tediously away. At noon, from the upper deck, we could see the deserted Confederate forts at Warrenton. Several gunboats came down to convoy us, and in so doing found a masked battery in the woods below Warrenton, and shelled it from position. We had been

moving steadily toward it. While this artillery fight was in progress, our transports hurried over to the Louisiana shore, and all the troops disembarked. At the end of several hours we went aboard again, and the fleet slowly steamed up in the direction of the Vicksburg canal.

It was late in the afternoon, and few of us forget the first view we had of Vicksburg. Its spires glittered, and for miles its warlike hills shone in the blaze of the western sun; high in air could be seen the bursting of innumerable shells; white circlets of smoke floated above the fated city, and then disappeared; the forts and fleets, in furious combat, exchanged missiles that hissed and screamed through the air; the quick flash of artillery on the lofty heights resembled the lightning's flash; clouds of dust arose a hundred feet high as some tremendous and well directed explosive struck the broad front of a fort; huge guns could be seen shining behind works that were suddenly rent; answering missiles would strike near the black gunboats; and slender, shining jets of water would dart straight up in the air, and fall back in showers of spray; like uneasy monsters the ironclads kept in constant motion, firing from one side and then swinging slowly around, and firing from the other, and moving restlessly up and down stream, never keeping still a moment; white clouds of smoke floated off from hotly engaged batteries; the booming of a thousand guns, softened by the dis-

tance, was musical and grand, and past that magnificent and indescribable panorama of war, the great river flowed as tranquilly on as though pouring its smooth tides through the heart of a wilderness.

CLINT PARKHURST

## The Lake of the Taensa

How often it happens that incidents in history — though they may be recorded in detail and with great authenticity by men of the time — leave no trace upon the scene of their enactment. New generations live upon the spot in utter ignorance of the early happenings, and often the record itself — hidden away in old documents — is almost lost to the knowledge of man.

There was a small, crescent-shaped lake a few miles from the Mississippi River on whose banks two and a half centuries ago lived the Taensa Indians. Their buildings and their mode of life moved Tonty — the Man with the Iron Hand — to deep astonishment when he first visited them in 1682; and Iberville, coming up from the mouth of the river in the spring of 1700, spent several days at the village and records in his journal a series of events on the shores of the lake that are among the most weirdly dramatic in all the annals of Indian life.

With this in mind it is with great interest that one reads in Mr. Parkhurst's article in the preceding pages on Vicksburg these descriptive lines:

On the following day our course lay away from the Mississippi, and we marched for fifteen miles along Lake St. Joseph, the opposite side of which was green with vernal woods that rose from the edge of the waters. The

lake was a lovely sylvan-flood, and around its fertile shores had been one of the garden spots of Louisiana. Even as we gazed the country to the rear was one vast field of sugar cane and Indian corn, which in the distance resembled the green waves of the sea. Only the day before, expensive homes, sugar mills, and cotton plants of great cost looked out upon the placid lake in proud serenity. Now, where we marched, were smouldering ruins, and for miles ahead we could see smoke and flames wrapping roofs and walls that towered high.

Little did Mr. Parkhurst and the men of the Sixteenth Iowa Infantry realize that they were marching over historic ground. But it so happened that Lake St. Joseph was the identical lake on whose banks the Taensa Indians had lived and the smoke and flames that now wrapped the buildings on the shores were only a modern counterpart of the scenes of a wild night of destruction in the days of King Louis the Fourteenth and his colonial ventures. The story of the Lake of the Taensa is preserved in the ancient journals and reports of Tonty and Father Membré, of La Harpe, and Pénicaut, and Montigny, and Iberville; and it seems well worth retelling.

In the latter part of March, 1682, La Salle was descending the Mississippi on his memorable trip to the sea. The banks of the river were drowned by the spring floods and fogs hung often upon the water. They had paddled far south of the farthest explorations of Marquette and Jolliet, and were now

journeying in a strange country, but at the Arkansas villages they had been given guides to show them the way to the villages of the Taensa. Beside a swamp on the west shore of the river they halted and camped while Tonty and two other Frenchmen with the Arkansas guides, pushing through the swamps to the lake, paddled across to a village on the west shore.

Introduced by the Arkansas guides they were given a most friendly reception, and found the village one of absorbing interest. The buildings were like none that Tonty had seen in all his wanderings. The first one into which they were ushered was the lodge of the chief. It was forty feet square, with thick walls made of sun dried mud rising to a height of ten or twelve feet and surmounted by a dome-like roof of matted cane. Inside they found themselves in a single large room in whose center a torch of dried canes was burning. There were no windows but the light of the torch fell upon gleaming shields of burnished copper and Indian paintings which adorned the walls.

The chief sat upon a couch with his three wives beside him, and opposite him were sixty old men dressed in white robes made from the bark of the mulberry tree. To do him honor the old men, standing with their hands upon their heads, burst out in unison with the cry "Ho-ho-ho-ho". He spoke to them and they seated themselves. A man of great dignity was this chief. He was dressed, like the old

men, in a fine white robe, and a dozen pearls as big as peas hung from his ears. Unusual honors were paid to him. He commanded and was obeyed like a royal potentate. Slaves waited upon him, and he ate and drank from individual dishes made of well glazed earthenware.

As Tonty sat upon his cane mat in the lodge, a little Indian child started to pass between the flaring torch and the chief, whereupon his mother seized him hastily and made him walk around the torch. Such was the respect paid to the living chief, and when a chief died it was the custom of the Taensa to kill a number of his followers in order that they might accompany and serve him in the next world.

Across from the lodge of the chief was the sacred temple, a similar structure but with an enclosing wall of mud surrounding it. Into this mud wall were fixed spikes upon which were placed the heads of their enemies, which they sacrificed to the sun. Over the roof of the temple were three carved eagles facing toward the rising sun. The inside of the temple was somewhat bare, but in the midst of the room was an altar at the foot of which were placed on end three logs of wood, and here was kept a sacred and perpetual fire attended by two old men who guarded it day and night. In this holy temple also were preserved the bones of departed chiefs.

When Tonty told the chief of his own white leader encamped beside the Mississippi, the Taensa chief decided to pay him the courtesy of a visit, and the



next day with high pomp he set out in a pirogue to the camp of La Salle, accompanied by many canoes loaded with provisions of which the French were in great need. He drew near the camp to the sound of the tambour and the music of his women. A fine robe of beautiful white cloth adorned his person and he was preceded by six men who swept with their hands the ground over which he was to pass and spread out a cane mat for him to sit upon. Two men with fans of white feathers accompanied him, either to drive away the evil spirits or to prevent the gnats from biting; and a third bore plaques of highly polished copper. Gifts were exchanged by the two chiefs and then the Taensa, grave and dignified to the last, withdrew in state to his village upon the lake.

La Salle and Tonty and their adventurous company continued their journey to the sea and took possession of all the land on behalf of King Louis of France. In the years that followed Tonty made several visits to his new acquaintances on the lake. In 1686, when he went to the mouth of the river to look for La Salle, he stopped to see them and on the shores of the crescent-shaped lake they sang the calumet to him. Again when he made his valiant expedition to the southwest to try and rescue the ill fated survivors of his murdered leader, he turned west from the Mississippi at their village.

Many years rolled by and missionaries from the north began to push down into the lower Mississippi.

Father Montigny came to make his home at the Taensa village. About the same time Iberville and Bienville came in ships to the Gulf of Mexico and — more fortunate than La Salle — succeeded in finding the mouth of the great river. And Tonty, still holding sway in the fur trading posts of the upper valley, came down the river to meet and greet his countrymen on the shores of the Gulf.

They talked over the situation in the valley and Iberville determined to visit the tribes west of the Mississippi, leaving the river at the Taensa village. So in the spring of the year 1700, setting out with several of Tonty's men for guides, he came on the morning of March 14th to the border of the Lake of the Taensa. Signal shots from the guns brought four Indians in whose canoes they embarked to cross the lake. About noon they reached the village where they found Father Montigny and two other Frenchmen happy to greet them.

The village was much the same as when Tonty had first found it. The old men in white robes, and the cane-roofed lodge of the chief, the imposing temple, the sacred fire and the two men who guarded it, were there as of old. But where was that dignified and mighty ruler, the chief himself? Montigny could tell, and the Frenchmen who had been with him in the village. They did not forget the day that the last chief had died.

Among all the customs of the Taensa tribe perhaps none was so firmly established as that which

provided an escort for the chief when he ended his earthly career. He who had received their constant and devoted attention while he was alive should not be allowed to go alone to find his way to the great beyond. So when the last chief had died they began to make preparations to kill a number of his followers that they might accompany him. But they killed no one this time for Father Montigny had come to live in their village and he protested, with horror in his face, against such a sacrifice. In spite of the customs of the tribe and the insistence of the disappointed medicine man the long robed French priest had his way and for once at least in the history of the Taensa village a chief went alone and unaided to the far country of the dead. And to this day of the coming of Iberville, the old medicine man had nursed his resentment over the desertion of the ancient faith.

On the night of the 16th the rain came down in torrents upon the cane domes of the village lodges and ran down the streets toward the lake. With the night it did not stop but thunder deep and terrible roared overhead and lightning played in the dark heavens. Suddenly came a terrific crash that woke every Indian and white visitor in the village. As if in answer a flame leaped up from the roof of the sacred temple. Out from every lodge came frightened Indians to gather before the doomed building of their faith.

The cane roof burned like tinder and on the outer

wall the skulls of their enemies must have seemed weird and taunting in the glare of the flames. Full of terror and tumult the crowd of savages swarmed about the scene, tearing their hair and raising their arms to heaven as they invoked the spirit to extinguish the flame. They cried aloud above the crackling of the fire, then they gathered handfuls of earth and rubbed on their naked bodies and faces.

Presently they saw the wild figure of an old man gesticulating and heard him calling above the tumult:

“Women, bring your children to offer to the Spirit as a sacrifice to appease his wrath.”

It was the old medicine man who had sulked since the last chief had died. Now, he said, was their punishment come for the Spirit was angered that no man or woman of the Taensa had gone the dark and lonely way with the chief when he had passed out of their village. Now they must appease him, and again he cried out to them to bring him their children.

The flames licked the sacred building like a hideous spirit and the carved eagles from their high perch looking out over the lake tumbled down into the fiery ruin. Indian women in a frenzy came running up with their babies and handed them over to the medicine man. Five of them he took and tossed into the glowing fire before the white men rushing up could stop the terrible sacrifice. But the fire still raged

and utterly consumed the temple and the altar and all the sacred possessions.

The tragic night gave way at last to a wet and dreary day, but in the village of the Taensa excitement still reigned. The five mothers who had sacrificed their children were taken in great honor to the lodge of the one who was to be the new chief. There they were showered with praise and clothed in white robes. A huge feather was stuck in the hair of each one and they were seated on mats beside the medicine man at the entrance of the chief's lodge which was now to serve as a temple. All day long they sat in this post of honor and at night they retired into the lodge to sing weird songs, taking up their posts by the door again when morning came.

Each day, toward sunset, a curious ceremony was carried out. Three young Indian men gathered bundles of dry wood and piled them in the open space between the burned temple and the new chief's lodge. Then an old man who guarded the sacred fire came with a torch and lighted the fagots. As he touched the flame to the wood the medicine man who had been waiting observantly in the door of the chief's lodge walked slowly out followed by the five heroic women. In his left hand he held a pillow of feathers covered with leather and he beat upon it with a stick which he held in his right as if to beat time to the chant which they sang as they advanced.

Three times the old man and the women, singing lustily, circled about the fagots, then they threw

themselves upon the burning wood and with great handfuls of wet moss put out the flames. This done the women went to the lake to bathe, returning finally to take up their chants in the lodge of the new chief.

After a few days Iberville and his men departed. Father Montigny, expecting a missionary from Canada to replace him, moved on to the villages of the Natchez. The missionary from Canada, however, did not come, and in 1706, harassed by the Yazoo and the Chickasaw, the Taensa gave up their village home on the lake and moved south to the region of Mobile Bay. The sacred fire died out, the mud walls and cane roofs vanished, and the canoes of the white men no longer slipped past the lazy alligators in the Lake of the Taensa.

A century and a half went by on slow wings. White settlers had come into the region and found its soil fertile. Sugar plantations and fine homes had appeared beside the shore, and the lake had come to be known as Lake St. Joseph. Then came the Civil War. The savage Indian tribes were gone, but warring white men passed here and there and often left a trail of fire. Such a trail had marked the shores of Lake St. Joseph in May of 1863. Following this path of destruction came the Sixteenth Iowa Infantry marching to the river landing to join the armies that were investing Vicksburg.

For fifteen miles they passed along the edge of

the lake amidst smoldering ruins and flame wrapped roofs. But though the feet of Clinton Parkhurst and his comrades may have trod the very site of the ancient temple of the Taensa Indians, there came to them no visions of the dignified chief dressed in a robe of white mulberry bark, nor did the flames of the modern devastation bring to their minds any picture of that wild night when these same shores of the crescent-shaped lake were the scene of a blazing shrine and the fanatical burning of human sacrifices.

JOHN C. PARISH



## Comment by the Editor

### THE PASSING OF THE EXPLORER

Columbusing as a general practice has become almost obsolete. To the explorers of 1492 the biggest part of the world lay undiscovered; and they merely led the way. In the fifteen hundreds hardy seamen like Drake or Frobisher could make wonderful finds simply by sailing around in boats. De Soto and Coronado, not content with cruising, took to the interior and marched tremendous distances with proportionately small results.

During the next century adventuring in the new world was quite the vogue. And in the seventeen hundreds monarchs whose intrepid men had rambled over the new regions began to contest in earnest for these spots. They sent out more adventurers and followed them with armies; and as the century drew to a close nations came to a rough division of the spoils and began to ask what their possessions were like.

More chance for the explorers. They set out upon the westering waters in search of trade routes. They moved in canvas topped Ninas and Pintas and Santa Marias across the interminable plains in search of gold. More prosaic settlers came and filled in the intervening spaces.

As the Twentieth Century came in the people of the world began to see the limits of discovery. Scarcely any region remained except a few islands in the South Seas, and the North and South Poles. Now the poles have been found and the islands of the ocean explored, and the dark skinned Eskimos and the dusky southern belles have somewhat lost their novelty. The world has been discovered, and adventuring Columbuses are faced with unemployment.

#### VERTICAL EXPLORATION

Nevertheless, there is hope. Horizontal exploration is waning but the vertical quest is hardly begun. The explorers have turned from the ships of the sea and the plain, and interested themselves in the pick and shovel. They have taken to intensive discovery. Under the sands of Egypt, beneath the tangle of tropical foliage in Central America, buried on the hill tops of the Andes, or underlying the plains of the Mississippi Valley are the new lands they hunt.

The discoveries are astonishing. In Egypt within a very few years buried cities have given up enormous quantities of papyrus manuscripts — among them a Biblical manuscript a century earlier than any before known. The clearing away of underbrush and soil reveals the wonderful city of Machu Picchu in Peru and the ancient pyramids and writings of Central America.

Under the soil of the North American Continent lie the remains of ancient man and the signs of his culture. And scattered and hidden in the old wallows and tar beds are the still more ancient bones of the mammoth and the sabre-toothed tiger. But a Columbus nowadays must be more than a hardy adventurer. Archaeology has become a fine art and the tar beds, and burial mounds, and effigies, and cliff dwellings must be explored by those who know how, or the results are worse than useless. In several of the States archaeological surveys have been begun under scientific auspices. Iowa offers an exceptional field for intensive exploration.

#### RAILROAD HISTORY

It seems a far cry from prehistoric relics to the era of railroad building. But even that recent era is full of haze and oblivion. Back in the early days of railroad promotion and construction, companies were started which have long since been forgotten. The stakes on old lines of survey have rotted away, the long straight embankments of abandoned work are overgrown with weeds or perhaps have been obliterated. And even the beginnings of surviving companies are indistinct in memory and record.

The publication of some railroad material in the January number of the *PALIMPSEST* has brought interesting responses. We have since had the pleasure of looking over a *Corporate History of the Chicago*,

*Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company* prepared by W. W. Baldwin, vice president. It is a large volume of nearly five hundred pages and it is notable, among other things, for the care with which the salient facts have been gathered and presented, together with separate maps, for each one of the 204 companies which had a part in building the network known as the Burlington System.

We understand that the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad Company is preparing a history of that organization in connection with the commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the initial operation of trains in 1852. It was this line from Chicago to Rock Island which the old M. & M. Railroad Company was organized to extend. A reference by Mr. Usher in one of the letters printed in January to the effect that Mr. Farnam, the road-builder of the Rock Island road in Illinois, finished his contract a year ahead of time and was running it on his own hook for that year, brings this comment from a son, Mr. Henry W. Farnam of New Haven, Connecticut, in a letter to Mr. A. N. Harbert of Iowa City:

It is true that the firm of Sheffield and Farnam, in which Mr. Joseph E. Sheffield of New Haven was associated with my father, contracted to build the Chicago & Rock Island Railroad and finished it about eighteen months in advance of the time specified and I believe that the contractors had the right to run the road for their own profit during that time. But, in point of fact, they did not. The first train

passed over the road from Chicago to Rock Island February 22nd and on July 10th the road was formally turned over to the company. Mr. Usher's letter was written May 8th so that I presume my father was actually running the road at the time, but he ran it for less than five months and not for a year.

#### THE ANTOINE LE CLAIRE

The coming of the railroad to the east bank of the river in 1854 turned men's thoughts to bridge building, but the first locomotive to cross the Mississippi did not wait for the completion of the bridge. It came over on a flatboat and was christened the Antoine Le Claire. In the article on the M. & M. Railroad in the January PALIMPSEST this event is given as occurring in July, 1854, in accordance with various printed statements to that effect. However, this antedates the fact by a year as we have since been able to determine. Conflicting statements sent us back to contemporary sources. Newspapers are not always the most authentic records, but in fixing the chronology of events happening at the time and not then subject to controversy they are apt to be more accurate than later secondary accounts. The *Keokuk Gate City* for July 25, 1855, prints an item chronicling the arrival in Davenport of the Antoine Le Claire, and comments on this coming of the first locomotive to Iowa.

We would give much to know the later history of the veteran engine. The first printing press to run

off a newspaper in Iowa stands in state in the museum of a neighboring Commonwealth, which it also served. But perhaps the locomotive, being of a more adventurous spirit and a more dangerous occupation in life, came to a violent end, and disintegrated into unhistoric scrap iron.

J. C. P.



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**PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT IOWA CITY BY  
THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA**



## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

The PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

*Superintendent*

## THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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PRICE—10c per copy: \$1 per year: free to members of Society

ADDRESS—The State Historical Society Iowa City Iowa

# THE PALIMPSEST

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VOL. III

ISSUED IN APRIL 1922

NO. 4

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## The Wedding of James Harlan

A man's marriage is without doubt a most important incident in his career. Yet the biographer of James Harlan, for sixteen years United States Senator from Iowa, notes the event in this brief statement:

Early in November . . . he drove to Greencastle; and there, on Sunday, November 9, 1845, James Harlan and Ann Eliza Peck were united in marriage, President Simpson officiating at the ceremony.<sup>1</sup>

It should be stated, in explanation of this brevity, that the first draft of the biography was prepared in anticipation of a two-volume work; but for the sake of uniformity the editor of the series reluctantly concluded to publish the work in a single volume; thus compelling the elimination of many interesting bits of description. The simplicity of the Harlan-Peck wedding, in contrast with the elaborate wed-

<sup>1</sup> Johnson Brigham's *James Harlan* in the *Iowa Biographical Series* published by the State Historical Society of Iowa.

ding festivities and ceremonies of our time, deserves to be made a matter of record. The following account, hitherto unpublished, is taken from the first draft of the biographical manuscript.

Among the young ladies mentioned in James Harlan's diary for the college year 1844-5, we find most frequent mention of "Ann Eliza Peck"—destined to be the devoted wife and helpmate of the future statesman and the loving mother of his children.

In this connection the following entry in Harlan's autobiographical manuscript is interesting, not only as showing the success of the young lover's suit, but also as revealing the simple, honest directness of the man's nature.

Visited Miss Peck in the evening; and had a long confidential talk with her, propounding numerous questions about herself and her views and purposes and preferences, intended by me to elicit information as to her sentiments towards me, and freedom from committals to any one else. Her answers were frank, and as I desired and hoped; and left no doubt on my mind as to her respect for my character and cordial friendship for me personally. At the close of this conversation, although no offer of myself was made or intended on my part, or apprehended by her, yet somehow I felt that our relations had changed to more than cordial friendship.

Soon following this interview is recorded the im-

portant fact that then and there he "came to a definite understanding with" Miss Peck as to what their "relations should become at sometime in the future."

Either the instinct of the educator was strong in him or the desire to measure up to his attainments was strong in her, for an entry of June 16th records his engagement to hear Miss Peck recite two or three times a week in mental science and other advanced studies not included in the course pursued in Mrs. Larabee's school for young ladies. He says: "I gave her an examination on her preceding lessons in Upham's mental philosophy; and formed a very flattering opinion of her capacity."

In the evening, following the Commencement exercises, President Simpson gave a reception to the graduating class, but Harlan, weary and yearning for rest, started for home immediately after dinner. Finding his saddle-horse had been loaned for the day, he returned to Greencastle and in due time appeared at the reception, much to the surprise of his friends. Mrs. Simpson, knowing of his engagement, rallied him on the impropriety of coming alone and ordered him to produce Miss Peck. The order was promptly obeyed.

Following his graduation, Harlan returned home and was soon at work in the fields assisting his father, plowing fallow land and putting in a wheat crop.

Early in September, young Harlan returned to

Greencastle, by agreement, to plan with his prospective wife for the immediate future. His frank and manly report of the interview is noteworthy. He explained to her his slender resources, having no trade, no capital, no profession. He about decided to become a farmer, a vocation which he "fully understood and liked." The question presented itself; Was she willing to share with him such a life in an obscure country neighborhood? She responded with equal frankness that she liked the country; that when she engaged herself to him she expected that he would make his own choice of a calling, and would cheerfully abide by his judgment. When he asked her to fix a date for her marriage, she replied she thought she could "get ready" in a year. He insisted that a week or ten days should be ample, arguing that "long engagements were proverbially unlucky." The lovers compromised on the 9th of the next November as the wedding day.

He then returned to his work on the farm and later engaged to teach a three-months school on Little Raccoon Creek, near the home of his brother-in-law, David Reeder, with whom he made his home.

On the evening of November 7, he drove to his father's; and the next morning, with his two sisters, Lydia and Jane, and his prospective brother-in-law Snow, drove to the home of Dr. Knight, his future wife's guardian, in Pleasant Garden, where the party dined. Mr. Snow on his behalf interviewed the clerk of the court, making the necessary preliminary

arrangements for the marriage ceremony the next day. The party was generously entertained at Dr. Knight's, and on the following morning all drove to Hammond's Hotel, in Greencastle. Here, they were honored by a call from President Matthew Simpson.

At eleven o'clock Sunday morning, November 9, 1845, the party walked to the Methodist church where Dr. Simpson delivered "an excellent sermon" and at its close announced that he had been requested to pronounce a marriage ceremony, asking the parties to come forward to the altar. The two were pronounced husband and wife, and after the benediction and the congratulations of their friends, the party walked back to the hotel. After dinner the newly wedded pair drove to Father Harlan's home in the woods, and entered upon their life career together.

JOHNSON BRIGHAM

## In the Neutral Ground

[Willard Barrows, a surveyor with a gift for writing, came to Davenport in 1837. In 1845 he published a handbook called *Notes on Iowa Territory with a Map*. In 1859 appeared his valuable *History of Scott County*. The following account is taken from a collection of his reminiscences preserved in a volume, now very rare, published by William Barrows in 1869 under the title *Twelve Nights in the Hunter's Camp*.—THE EDITOR.]

In 1839 I was employed in the survey of the public lands in Iowa, on what was called The Black Hawk Purchase. This new acquisition was then being settled up with great rapidity.

In 1840 I undertook for government the survey of the islands in the Mississippi, between the mouth of Rock River and Quincy. It was a work of great difficulty and hardship. These islands had been surveyed several times by other parties, but their work was so incorrect that the government rejected it. Mine was the last one made. It was commenced early in the spring, amid floating ice and high water, and in rough weather. It was necessary to extend the section lines from the mainland to the islands, and then meander the islands. Of course the party were compelled to be much in the water, and, as a consequence, there was much sickness among them, as well as delay in the work. But I completed it that season, and in a manner satisfactory to the government.



Falling readily into the custom of frontier men, I joined a party of seven, in the fall of this year, to go on a hunting expedition into the Indian country. The outfit consisted of horse and ox teams, with tents, blankets, provision, and, in this case, with barrels, as we intended to take wild honey. It was not usual for hunters to go far beyond the settlements at that early day; but our company was made up of men not only fond of the chase, but anxious to explore a region so much talked of, and not unwilling to have exciting adventures.

The company set forth about the first of September, and, following the dividing ridge between the Cedar and the Wabessapinecon Rivers, were some seven days in reaching the grounds on which they intended to hunt, a tract between the head-waters of these two rivers.

The constant broils between the Sacs and Foxes and the Sioux, whose lands adjoined, induced the government in 1828 [1830] to cut off a strip of land twenty miles wide on each side of the dividing line between the tribes, making forty miles of territory in width, running from the Mississippi River above Prairie du Chien, to the Des Moines, a distance of about one hundred and fifty miles. This strip of land neither party could use for hunting purposes, and was called The Neutral Grounds.

When the Winnebagoes sold their lands in Wisconsin, they were removed to these Neutral Grounds, being at peace with the Indians on both sides. The

Winnebagoes were in possession of these lands at the time our party went on this hunt.

When we arrived near the boundary line of the Indians, we encamped, and for many days enjoyed the sports of the chase, and took some honey. Here we waited till the Indians should start on their journey to Prairie du Chien to receive their annuity from government, which we knew was to be paid about this time. We also knew that their absence was the only time when we could hunt and gather honey on these Neutral Grounds with any safety.

We were accordingly ready to remove to the scene of operations as soon as the Indians left. We did so at the earliest opportunity, and camped on what we called Honey Creek, a small stream within the Neutral Grounds. Not far from the camp was a white oak grove, on a rise of land. The trees were large and old, and many of them hollow, and on a half mile square of this grove we found sixteen bee trees. Other game was plenty, and we enjoyed ourselves during one of those delightful Indian summers, so much admired in the West.

We felt secure so long as the Winnebagoes were away. We had no right on their lands without their permission, or that of the Indian agent; and when whites were caught hunting or fishing there, their property was considered by the Indians as lawful prize.

We had completed our hunt, having strained the honey and put it in casks, jerked the meat, and got it

ready to pack, and prepared everything for a home-ward move, except the trying out of a large quantity of beeswax. It was late in the afternoon when some of the party, who had been out hunting, came into camp and reported Indians in the vicinity. Scouts being sent out, several were seen, and one even came into camp, and viewed the rich store of meat and honey that we had taken. He was grave and severe, and refused food, which fact we all understood painfully well. He left, and we sent a spy to watch him. When some distance from camp, he put spurs to his horse, and went at full speed across the prairie.

It was now well understood that the Indians had returned from the agency, and that we might expect a visit from them about daylight the next morning, the time when all tribes are wont to open their attacks on an enemy. The hunting party put their arms in order, and determined on defence, if the enemy should not prove to be too numerous. All hands were now engaged in packing and loading the wagons preparatory to a retreat. The barrels of honey were loaded in, the oxen and horses gathered and tied near by in the bush, for fear that the intentions of the party to depart might be discovered by some Indian spy. The company had taken eight barrels of strained honey, besides much elk and deer meat.

Waiting for the rising of the moon, and then building a large camp fire, we hitched up our teams, and placing a rear guard and pilot, we started for home. After much trouble and a few miles' travel, we

struck the trail where we entered, and about daylight we passed safely the boundary line. About the same time, probably, the Indians were visiting our old camping-ground to rob us of our booty. These same Indians had robbed trappers and explorers the fall preceding, and they were disposed, on all safe occasions, to appropriate the effects of the white man to their own use. But they gave us no difficulty, and we arrived home in safety, and well laden with game and honey.

In 1841-2, the public surveys being suspended, I turned my attention to a more full exploration of the territory that had been cut off from Wisconsin, and called Iowa. At this time there had not been any maps or sketches of the country lying north of the State of Missouri, and between the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers.<sup>1</sup> Major Lee [Lieutenant Lea], of the United States army, had made a tour, with dragoons, up the Des Moines, and Nicholat [Nicollet] had traversed the north-west on both sides of the Mississippi, by order of Congress, and made some outlines and topography of the country. But there was nothing reliable, or what could give one a tolerable idea of the region between the two rivers. The vague and romantic story of the trapper was all that the people of the frontier knew of the region.

These wild adventurers gave the most glowing accounts of its beautiful groves of timber, its swift-flowing rivers, and its broad-rolling prairies, its glassy lakes, with pebbled shores, and abundance of

<sup>1</sup> A good map had been published by Colton in 1839.—THE EDITOR.

fish, and its immense herds of buffalo, elk, and deer, that roamed at will over the delightful wilds. But they could give no great landmarks, or inland seas, by which the traveller could direct his course.

At the instance of Governor Chambers, of the then new Territory of Iowa, and the solicitation of the surveyor general of the North-west, I undertook the exploration of the territory, and at my own charges. With two men and a proper outfit, I set forth, in the autumn of 1841, to sketch the country and make a map of the same, as far north as the forty-third degree, the present southern boundary of Minnesota. In this work I was engaged a portion of the time for three years, making annual excursions, tracing the rivers to their sources, and marking the timber lands, living the while mostly on game.

The Indian title at this time was extinguished to only a small part lying along the Mississippi River. The rest was inhabited by the Sacs and Foxes, the Potawatamies, and the Winnebagoes. In my first trip I followed up the ridge between the Cedar and the Wabessapinecon Rivers to the boundary line of the Neutral Grounds, on which the Winnebagoes resided. Here I established my headquarters for the winter, and built a depot for my supplies. It was located on a small creek, in a deep and densely-wooded glen, a few miles from the Wabessapinecon, and just within the line between the Indians and the whites. This was about the first of September, and the chief of the band who lived on this portion of the

Neutral Grounds, and whose village was only about six miles away, had gone with the most of his braves and great men to Prairie du Chien. No communication, therefore, could be had with him till his return, which would be a month or more. Portions of his people were encamped near by, on their fall hunt, and came often to my camp. In this band were some young men and boys who had attended the Mission School at Fort Atkinson, on Turkey River, established and maintained by the government.

It is a characteristic of the Indian never to speak English, even if he can, unless sheer necessity compels him, or when he is sure his people will not know it. It is considered a kind of disgrace, as if he were tinctured with civilization, and were apostatizing from the dignity of his fathers, and becoming a white man.

I had learned some Winnebago words from the Sacs and Foxes, some of whom spoke it, though the two languages are quite unlike. As I could not proceed across the Indian country till Chas-chun-ka (Big Wave) returned, I set my men to hunting and storing away provisions for the winter, while I attempted to gain a sufficient knowledge of the language to enable me to travel intelligently among them. It was always necessary for one to remain in camp to prevent Indian depredations, and to keep the horses from straying. This duty I now took on myself, and encouraged the Indian boys, who frequently visited the camp, to be familiar, giving them presents of



red cloth and ribbons, bread and pork, of which they are very fond, and other trifles of civilization.

They soon became familiar, answering promptly the questions I put them, as to the names of things. One day, what were my surprise and delight, when I inquired of a sprightly lad, about twelve years of age, and who had come into the cabin alone, what he called the victuals that were then cooking in the kettle, to hear him answer in plain, unbroken English, "Why, it is pork and beans, and I shall want some bread and potatoes to eat with them when they are done." His dark, keen eye twinkled with the answer, and he burst into a fit of laughter, half hiding his face through shame that he knew so much of the white man's language.

He saw my delight at discovering his knowledge, and yielded freely to the questions, where, and how, and when he obtained the English so perfectly. He had been a pupil in the Mission School of the Rev. David Lowry for five or six years, and could read as well as speak English quite fluently. When I applied to him to teach me, nothing could exceed his unwillingness, even to interpret. But my close familiarity and gentleness, and presents for himself and mother, whose lodge was about a mile distant, won him over, and he proved of great value, not only in teaching me, but in shielding me from dangers afterwards.

The return of Chas-chun-ka, about the first of November, was speedily heralded through the Indian



camp, and I was notified by my friendly and faithful little mission boy, who, by this time, knew all my desires and plans.

The chief was, like the most of his race, vain and conceited, puffed up with self-importance, but susceptible of flattery, and fond of presents. He was not an hereditary chief, but a Fox by birth, and having joined the Winnebagoes at an early age, he had risen to his present position by the force of native talent. He was worth some property in horses and presents, given him by the agents and officers of the government. He had two wives, and was about to take a third; but as the winter was near, and provisions scarce, he had concluded to wait till spring.

He was duly notified of my presence in the country, and my wish to hold a conference with him at my tent whenever his chieftainship would please to signify his willingness. Early one morning, a few days after his return, a cavalcade was seen coming across the prairie towards my camp. In due time, and in long Indian file, they drew up around my cabin. I remained inside to receive the distinguished guests, while his officials motioned to the Indians, as they dismounted, to enter the council.

There were twelve or more under-chiefs and braves who accompanied Chas-chun-ka. He entered first, bowing and shaking hands with me. This salutation was repeated by the whole troop. They then seated themselves around the cabin, on the ground, but their chief on a bench. The appearance of the

chief was very surprising to me, for I had expected to see a profusion of paint and feathers, and wampum of costly texture. Instead of that, he was clothed in a buffalo overcoat, a stove-pipe hat, and wore a pair of green spectacles. His belt was probably the gift of a soldier, as it bore the U. S. in front. His outfit had all probably been given to him by some traders at the fort.

I addressed him politely as he entered, but I did not at first regard him as the chief. On pronouncing his name, he bowed, and, as I supposed by his dress that he must be a half-breed, and could speak English, I addressed him in that tongue, but he would make no response. Still believing that it was only Indian policy and custom not to know English, I pressed the point in broken Indian; but a persistent protest of silence in Chas-chun-ka compelled me to send for my little teacher and mission boy, Wabessawawa (White Goose). He came trembling and abashed before the sachem and his warriors, and, as he passed the chief, the latter patted him on the head, and said some approving word, that caused the boy to smile.

The council was opened as usual with the pipe and the shaking of hands. Then all were seated again, and looked to me to make known my business. I arose, and after telling them of my long residence at Assinni-Manness [Rock Island], with their friends, the Sacs and Foxes, and of my labors for their Great Father, the President, in surveying the lands he

bought of them, I told them I had come to see their country by the request of their Father. Then I showed them the passport given me by General Chambers, and told the chief that I wanted to go across his country and make a picture of it for the president.

After hearing me and examining my maps and sketches taken on the way up, some of which he corrected — for the Indian is a topographical draughtsman by nature — he handed the papers back and shook his head. Looking around on his warriors with an air of kingly importance, he directed the interpreter to tell me that he could not let me go over his lands for any such purpose. He said he well knew the object of his Great Father in sending me there to make a picture of his country; that if it was good for the white he would buy it, but if not the Indian could keep it. No, I could not go. After many entreaties and presents to induce him to yield, I found it of no use, and the council broke up. This was a difficulty that I had not anticipated, and all my plans seemed liable to fail.

The next day I visited him with one of my men in his lodge at the village. He was affable and polite, but rather cool, and when the subject of explorations was introduced he became silent and morose. I therefore left him, determined to visit Fort Atkinson and see the Winnebago agent.

It had now become late in the season, and there was great danger in traversing an unknown country

at such an inclement season without a guide or trail. Moreover, I should be subject to the watchful eye of the Indians, and if the chief found I had left, he would send his warriors and bring me back. But I was not to be baffled in my plans, and give up my project without a struggle. I was not afraid of the Indian, for I knew that I was regarded as an agent of the government, and so no harm must come to me in his territory. I would not ask the chief for a guide, or even let him know of my intentions of visiting the agency, as it was on Indian territory, to which I had already been refused access.

I therefore set out early one morning, with one man and two horses, across the country one hundred and twenty-five miles, for Fort Atkinson, with no map or trail, and with the assurance, almost, that I should be arrested and brought back by the Indians. I knew the course to be about north-west, and expecting to find trails, or see some Indians, when near there, who would direct me to the fort, I entered on the journey. At first I avoided the prairie to escape the vigilance of the Indians. On the second day out a dense fog covered the open country, while it rained in torrents. The streams were so swollen that we were obliged to swim them with our horses. When three days out, and near night, it cleared up, the fog rolled off, and it turned cold. We steered for a grove in sight, which we reached just at dark, and to our surprise found there the ashes of our morning camp fire. We had wandered in the fog all day at good speed to come back there for the night.

The next morning we put out again, and after a journey of five days more, over wet prairie and swollen streams, we reached the fort. The first night we were entertained within its walls to our full comfort. The agent then provided for us during the ten days that we remained.

While here I visited the Mission School of Mr. Lowry. It contained about sixty scholars of both sexes, many of whom had made good advances in reading and writing English. There was a farm of twelve hundred acres, broken up and fenced, with suitable buildings, all belonging to the agency, and intended to teach the Indians agriculture and the arts of civilized life. But they could not be made to work. Government paid for the labor of eight men; but few Indians would go into the fields to work.

Mr. Lowry gave me a passport to go over the lands of the Winnebagoes: and he also wrote a letter to Chas-chun-ka, telling him what a great and good chief he was, and that he had always been friendly to the white man, and that now he must permit me to cross his lands whenever I pleased, and that by so doing he would not only please him, but his Great Father.

I returned, and, taking Wabessa-wawa to read the letter, I rode over to the lodge of the chief and presented him the papers given me by the agent. When the letter was read, it flattered his vanity so much that he sent for the chiefs and braves, and had the same read to them. When it spoke of his greatness

and goodness he would look around on his men with a proud and haughty air, as if to say, "Behold your chief, and hear what the white man says of him." His whole being seemed at once changed, and he told me that I might go all about over his country, and that he would send men with me.

The next day he came over to see me, and of course to get some presents. He wanted me to wait for him two weeks or so, when he would go with me. I did so, but seeing no preparation by him for such a trip, I started without him. My route lay up the Wabessapinecon to its head and down the Cedar.

During my absence the Indians, many of them, had removed, and among them, greatly to my regret, had gone the lodge of my little interpreter, Wabessawawa. I could get no information which way he had gone, only that he left with his people for a hunt.

After recruiting myself and horses, I again started towards the head-waters of the Des Moines. I had not passed the Neutral Grounds, when one day we came on an encampment of Winnebagoes, who seemed boisterous and much disposed to plunder, pulling the packs from the horses, and demanding bread and meat. Their rudeness was observed by the old men of the tribe, but they said nothing, till I went to one of them, and, addressing him in his own tongue, I told him I was the friend of Chas-chun-ka, and the agent of the government, and that I had a pass from Mr. Lowry, and that they must not allow their young braves to do such things. In a moment



he spoke to the rude fellows, telling them who I was, when they left the stores, but with evident reluctance and disappointment. On making inquiry for the trail that led to an old trading post on the river, four or five young Indians stepped forward and offered to show me the way. We took their lead, and pursued it for more than a mile, when, on looking back, I saw an Indian boy coming up in great haste. The party came to a halt, and the boy came up, wrapped in his blanket, his face half averted, but with his keen eye fixed on me.

Speaking in a low tone, he said, "You are on the wrong trail. The Indians who sent you here are bad Indians, and they mean to follow and rob you." I pulled the blanket aside, and discovered the pretty face of my Wabessa-wawa. He seemed in much excitement and haste. Requesting me to follow him, he struck off through the woods at a rapid rate, and where there was no path; and after travelling about a mile, he came out into a beaten track. "This," said he, "is your path. I heard you ask for the trail to the old trading-house, and saw those bad Indians put you in the wrong way, and I came to tell you." He would not allow me time to inquire where his lodge was, or where I should see him, if ever, again, nor hardly to untie the pack and give him some biscuit and pork. I did, however, adding some pieces of silver coin. Shaking the little fellow by the hand, I let go of him, and in a few moments he was lost in the thick wood, on his way to the lodge.



Here, thought I, are the fruits of Christianity and the germs of civilization in a savage. This boy had been taught at the Mission School, and, aside from seeing his friend robbed, he knew the wickedness of the deed, and his duty to prevent it. He had the native cunning of his race, and knew how to avoid detection for thwarting the designs of bad men.

We returned in safety from this trip, and once more recruited at our supply camp, or headquarters. Then we made a short excursion towards the Missouri River, but snows had become so deep that travelling was almost impossible. We were three weeks in snow from two to four feet deep. Our usual method in camping was to find a large log, tramp down the snow beside it, pitch the tent, spread down the green hides of elk or deer, and build a good fire. No dampness could penetrate these fresh skins, and so, wrapping ourselves in blankets and buffaloes, we slept soundly.

An Indian trader had come to the same place where we had made our depot, late in the fall, and, among other things, he, as usual, brought whiskey. He had built himself a small trading-house near to us. This served to gather about him large numbers of Indians, and though he managed to deal out his poison with some degree of caution, as a thing forbidden by the government, yet at times a few drunken Indians would be found about the camp. On such occasions I never allowed them in my camp.

On my return from the Missouri River trip I

found the trading-house closed, the Indians drunk, the barrel of whiskey, all that was left of the trader's stock, moved up to my camp, and the clerk there in attendance on it. The trader himself had gone to Dubuque for goods, and left his clerk, a cowardly and effeminate fellow, in charge. The Indians demanded liquor, and to prevent their getting it, he had rolled the barrel to my premises, and left it with my tent-keeper.

It was late in the night when I arrived, and being indignant that it had been placed in my depot, I ordered it out, and it was set outside. But it was too late in the stage of affairs to quell the disturbance. The Indians were already maddened by the beginnings of intoxication, and no persuasion or refusal of the trader's clerk could quiet their demands. I had peremptorily forbidden the sale of any more to them, and the clerk, now finding the trading-house too warm a place for him, closed the doors and took refuge in my tent.

The Indians had threatened to scalp him if he did not produce the liquor, and followed him to my quarters. Here they found the barrel of whiskey outside the door. I spoke to them with firmness, refusing them any more. A portion of them, Chas-chun-ka, and some of his braves, had come inside, and sat in silence around my fire. Some of the chiefs, who knew me well, had come to me in behalf of the whole, pleading for more whiskey. I firmly refused. Being weary from the long and hard march of the day, I

lay down for some rest, ordering my men to keep their arms in readiness, while I placed the heavy hickory fire-poker near me. The Indians were without arms, having deposited them, as usual, with their knives and tomahawks, on the top of the trading-house, and the most of them were too drunk to get them again readily, even if the sober ones would let them. As I lay on my lounge, a large crowd was outside, and ten or fifteen inside.

An old squaw, in order to bring me to terms, had commenced pounding on the head of the whiskey barrel, as it stood near my camp. Big Wave came to me in great pretended alarm, and told me that unless I permitted them to have whiskey, he feared they would break in the head of the barrel, and then all would be drunk, and great trouble would follow. I told him that if he allowed that liquor to be broken open I would kill every Indian within my reach. In the mean time the old squaw kept up her drumming, and as the chief himself disappeared from the doorway, the head of the cask went in!

In a moment I sprang from my bed, caught my walnut poker, a stick five feet long, and cried out to my men, in the Indian language, to kill all in the cabin first. With one stroke I split the table to pieces with a great noise, it being made of the lids of a dry goods box, and continued striking right and left, whooping loud and sharp to my men to kill the chiefs first. The cabin was soon emptied of Indians, and, with those outside, they all took to their heels

like a herd of deer. I had the barrel of whiskey moved inside again, the door barricaded, and quiet restored. Of course no Indian was hurt by us, as my men were under secret instructions to injure no one. The next morning a few came back, and were shown a large place in the snow where the whiskey was deposited, with the barrel bottom up over it. The liquor was confiscated and gone, only an odor remaining in the snow.

An Indian cannot fight with a club, but to him it is a most formidable weapon in the hands of an angry white man. Take from them the gun, tomahawk, and knife, and a resolute man can drive a host of them. When once the Indian has tasted liquor, he does not leave it till drunk, or the liquor gives out. He knows no other use for it, except to produce intoxication. It is not a pleasant beverage to him; he does not like the taste of it; it is only for the effect that he drinks it. His palate is as little vitiated as that of a child. He uses no salt, nor seasoned food, and has a very keen and sensitive taste. I have seen an Indian in apparent agony by the use of whiskey; for the article prepared for their market is often well spiced with red pepper and gums to keep up its strength. And I have seen the young Indian and squaw held by main strength, while whiskey has been administered to them, that they might be taught to drink it.

I returned to Davenport with my party, having accomplished a good work for the season, on my survey for a territorial map. This I finished the next year.

## A Visit to Dubuque's Grave

[On August 10, 1836, there appeared in the *Du Buque Visitor*, Iowa's first newspaper, the following account, by an unknown writer, of a visit to the grave of Julien Dubuque, who was working his mines west of the river before George Washington became President.—  
THE EDITOR.]

Messrs. Editors:—Thinking that a description of this spot, which interested me so much, may not be entirely without interest to some of your readers, I send you the following extract from my journal:

July 16, 1836.—This was a calm and delightful day. Anxious to escape, for a little while, from the bustle and confinement of the town, I procured a horse and started off for the country. I first rode four or five miles west, and then turned south with the intention of visiting Du Buque's grave. After riding four or five miles farther, I came to a beautiful little valley opening upon the river,—which was about two miles or two and a half below town, in a straight course. But the country along the bank of the river is so broken, and the hills are so high and steep, that no direct road has yet been made; and none ever can be except at great expense,—though it is possible that a road may be cut, without much difficulty, just on the bank of the river.

Here I rested a little while, and then inquired where the grave was. I was told it was upon the point just south of the valley. The point did not

appear more than a hundred feet high from my position at the foot of it; but it being too steep for my horse, I fastened him at the bottom, and commenced the ascent on foot. I clambered along as best I could, assisting myself with a stick in one hand and by laying hold of the shrubs with the other. At length I reached the summit, and a scene of singular beauty and magnificence burst upon my view. The place of the grave was the point of a ridge putting in there, which, like the grave, was by itself — alone. The ridge was not less than three hundred feet high, and on one side of it was the fine valley I had just left, and on the other, the mouth of a little stream called the Cat-Fish. The ridge gradually narrows as it approaches the river; and just at the extremity of it, where it is scarcely ten yards wide, and where a precipice of three hundred feet is on the three sides and so near, stands the grave. Beneath me, at my very feet, rolled the broad expanse of the Mississippi. There is but a slight current in the river there and there was scarcely a breeze to disturb its surface, so that it was smooth and beautiful and mirror-like: and as I gazed, delighted, upon it, I almost fancied that

“Lake Lemman wooed me with its crystal face.”

Far above and below, the channel of the river was in full view, but there was no “life upon the waters,” — for, far as the eye could reach, there was no steamer or “white sail” to be seen. But in the little creek which I have mentioned, was a “light canoe”,



— but the *red man* was not there. There were in it two Frenchmen, with their pipes. One of them propelled the canoe, and the other sat quietly in the stern with his rod and line, but, as far as I could see, without success. Then I looked beyond the river, but all I could see was a narrow and apparently very rich bottom, a few houses and one or two excellent farms, and, beyond these, the bluffs, the continuations of the ridges on the western side. These hills must have been once united; but, ages ago, they were disrupted by some mighty and terrible convulsion. It may have been by an earthquake; it may have been by a flood; or the wide space between the eternal hills may have been as it is now, when the universe came from the hands of its Creator, who made the mountains to rise, the valleys to sink, and the rivers to flow.

Two or three miles above, lay the populous and flourishing town which I had just left. But what added its highest glory to the scene, was, that the sun was midway in the western heavens, and the atmosphere was in its finest and purest state of vision, and there was a light wind playing by, as if the Spirit of the Universe was breathing its sweet influence over and around all.

But the grave — what was that? There was no mausoleum nor even a slab of marble there. A stone wall, enclosing a space about six feet long and three wide, two feet high, and covered by a light roof, contains his bones: — though I have been told that the



bones which are seen are not his but those of an Indian. At the head of the grave stands a cross of red cedar, about ten feet high, on the arms of which are inscribed his name, the time of his death and his age. The following is the inscription:—"Julien Du Buque, Mineur de la mine d'Espagne, morait le 24 Mars, 1810 — age de 45½ anneés."<sup>1</sup>

There were many names cut on all sides of the cross. I have often cut my name upon trees, not only in frequented places, but in the solitude of the great woods, where I thought it possible I might visit again. The recollection that my name is engraven there, gives such places an interest which they could have in no other way. In places, too, like this, where room to write one's name is a common heritage, I have always loved to write mine. And I carved it here upon this cross, where, from the durable nature of the material, it may stand for a hundred years.

I then descended from the hill, and mounting my horse, rode slowly homeward, and arrived in town just as the shades of evening were closing around me.

W.

<sup>1</sup> The baptismal register in Canada gives January 10, 1762, as the date of Dubuque's birth, thus making his age forty-eight instead of forty-five years.— THE EDITOR.

## Comment by the Editor

### IOWA'S FIRST WHITE SETTLER

It is usually a dangerous thing to deal in superlatives; and especially does the historian find that he must be circumspect in saying that any man or town or event was the *first* of its kind. We think we are reasonably safe in saying that Julien Dubuque was the first permanent white settler in what is now Iowa. He arrived with some French Canadian friends in 1788, having made an agreement with the Sac and Fox Indians, and began to mine lead near the site of the town that bears his name. Probably no one will question his permanence, for he continued to work his mines for nearly a quarter of a century, and his bones were laid away in 1810 on a nearby hilltop overlooking the Mississippi.

There are, however, hints of still earlier mining operations by white men. Father Mazzuchelli, who came to the Upper Mississippi Valley in the early thirties, says in his *Memoirs*:

The lead mines to the west of the Mississippi as far as  $42\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  N. had been worked at first by Mr. Long, then by his successor in the Indian trade, M. Cardinal, followed then by Mr. Dubuque. This account was given in 1835 by an aged Canadian, an octogenarian, who during the course of about twenty years had been in the service of the last mentioned gentleman.

The names Long and Cardinal are well known in connection with Prairie du Chien where Dubuque lived before crossing the river. John Long made a trip from Mackinac to Prairie du Chien in 1780 to prevent furs deposited at that place from falling into the hands of the Americans. But after setting fire to a building containing furs which he could not transport, he returned to the Lakes and there is no evidence of his ever having crossed the Mississippi. Apparently some time previous to this, Jean Marie Cardinal and his family came to Prairie du Chien and settled. Mrs. Cardinal lived to a ripe old age and when in a reminiscent mood used to tell of the coming of Long and the burning of the furs in 1780, but she seems to have said nothing of lead mines west of the river.

Even though there may have been some truth in the octogenarian's recital to Father Mazzuchelli, these early miners are but shadowy visitors, not permanent settlers, and doubtless the honor of being the first citizen of the land will not pass from the miner of the Mines of Spain.

#### DUBUQUE AND THE NATIONS

Dubuque's career at the mines is interesting from the standpoint of nationality. He was a French Canadian, who made friends with the Indians and retained a close alliance with them by reason of an unusual personality. He mined the land when it was

under the rule of Spain, and he continued unperturbed when it passed back to French jurisdiction and finally became American soil. His longest allegiance was to Spain and, calling his holdings the Mines of Spain, he secured from Baron Carondelet, the Governor of Louisiana, a Spanish land grant in 1796, which his heirs later made the basis of an unsuccessful claim to the town site of Dubuque.

That he was acquainted with the ingratiating phrases of diplomacy is evidenced by his letter to Carondelet which closes thus:

I beseech that same goodness which makes the happiness of so many subjects, to pardon me my style, and be pleased to accept the pure simplicity of my heart in default of my eloquence. I pray Heaven, with all my power, that it preserve you, and that it load you with all its benefits; and I am, and shall be all my life, your Excellency's very humble, and very obedient, and very submissive servant.

J. DUBUQUE.

And when Lieutenant Zebulon M. Pike came up the river in 1805 to gain information for the American government, and applied pointed questions to Dubuque about his mines, the latter replied in such a fashion that the discomfited Pike could only report that "the answers seem to carry the semblance of equivocation."

Verily this first settler of Iowa was a man whose personality is well worth the study of those who find nothing but mediocrity in the history of the Middle West.

J. C. P.



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MAY 1922

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THE EDITOR

PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT IOWA CITY BY  
**THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA**

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

The PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

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*Superintendent*

## THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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PRICE—10c per copy: \$1 per year: free to members of Society

ADDRESS—The State Historical Society Iowa City Iowa



# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN C. PARISH

ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

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VOL. III

ISSUED IN MAY 1922

No. 5

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## The First Mississippi Bridge

In the third quarter of the Nineteenth Century a struggle was going on in the Mississippi Valley between the forces behind north and south traffic and similar forces whose direction lay across the continent from east to west. It was a contest between the old lines of migration and the new; between the South and the East; between the slow and cheap transportation by water, and the rapid but more expensive transportation by rail; and it arrayed St. Louis and Chicago against each other in an intense rivalry.

It was a struggle in which the river interests played a losing game. The steamboat could only follow the water systems, while the railroad companies could lay their rails almost anywhere. A crisis came when an audacious railroad flung its rails across the path of the Mississippi steamboats at Rock Island.

In the early fifties the firm of Sheffield and Farnam completed the construction of the Michigan

Southern Railroad into Chicago, and this was but the preface to the building of the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad by the same firm from Chicago to the Mississippi River. The first train on this line reached the bank of the river at Rock Island in 1854 — and came naturally and positively to a halt.

Mr. Joseph E. Sheffield, patron of the Sheffield Scientific School at Yale University, now retired from active construction work, but his partner, Henry Farnam, continued his interest and activity in railroad building. He associated himself with a group of men from Iowa, Illinois, and the East, who organized the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad. This company projected a railway beginning at Davenport, across the river from the railhead at Rock Island, and crossing the State of Iowa to the Missouri River at Council Bluffs.

In order to unite these two railroads and make continuous the line of rails across the Valley, it was necessary to bridge the Mississippi River. In all the length of the stream from St. Paul to the Gulf of Mexico no bridges existed. It was a navigable waterway consecrated by nature, so thought the steamboat interests, to the north and south commerce.

The railroad interests, however, were little disposed to give consideration to such traditions, and on January 17, 1853, they secured the passage of a law by the Illinois legislature incorporating the Railroad Bridge Company, and authorizing it to build, maintain, and use a railroad bridge over the

Mississippi River, or that portion lying within the State of Illinois at or near Rock Island.

Henry Farnam was president of the bridge company and was chief engineer in the construction work. The Railroad Bridge Company issued bonds which were guaranteed by the two railroad companies, and commenced operations. They had authority only to build across that portion of the river lying within the State of Illinois, but they made an agreement whereby they coöperated with the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Company which could act under the authority of the laws of Iowa in the construction work on the Iowa side of the boundary. The latter company had secured from Antoine Le Claire a deed to the Iowa bank of the river at the required spot, and hence a right of way from the shore to the middle of the channel.

The construction really involved three portions: a bridge across the narrow arm of the river between the Illinois shore and the Island, a line of tracks across Rock Island, and the long bridge between the Island and the Iowa shore. The channel of the river passed the west side of the Island, and down the middle of this channel ran the boundary line between the two States. The bridge was of wooden superstructure and rested upon six piers between the Island and the western shore. Three piers were within the Iowa boundary and three on Illinois bottom. Of the latter three, the one nearest to Iowa was a large circular stone pier. It had a width of

45 feet and was prolonged up and down stream by guard piers until it reached a length of 386 feet. On this large pier rested the turntable or revolving section of the bridge which when turned at right angles to the rest of the bridge left an opening of 116 feet on the Illinois side of the pier and 111 feet on the Iowa side. Boats found the Illinois opening the more satisfactory because of eddies at the foot of the long pier on the Iowa side, and the latter was not used. The ordinary spans of the bridge had openings of 250 feet in the clear and through these went the lumber rafts — some as wide as 170 feet — and the boats without chimneys.

The opponents of this construction did not wait for the bridge to be built before beginning their attack. The Secretary of War directed the United States District Attorney for the northern district of Illinois to apply for an injunction to prevent the construction of a railroad across the Island and of bridges over the river. The case — that of the *United States v. Railroad Bridge Company et al.* — came before the United States Circuit Court in July, 1855. The presiding judge was John McLean, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. The matter at issue was largely the right to cross the Island, which was government property, but the question of the obstruction presented by the bridges was also involved. Judge McLean upheld the right of the bridge company and overruled the demand for an injunction.

So the work proceeded. In the latter part of April, 1856, the bridge was completed and the first train pulled across to Davenport, much to the joy of the people of Iowa. Use of the new bridge, however, was soon interrupted. The steamboat *Effie Afton*, attempting to go through the Illinois opening on May 6th, was wrecked against the piers. The boat caught fire and was destroyed, the flames also consuming the wooden span east of the draw, thus putting the bridge out of commission. Over four months elapsed before repairs could be completed so as to allow trains to resume the crossing of the bridge.

The owners of the *Effie Afton* now brought suit against the bridge company for damages, the boat having been completely destroyed. This case — *Hurd et al. v. Railroad Bridge Company* — came to trial before Justice John McLean in the United States Circuit Court in September, 1857. Abraham Lincoln was one of the attorneys for the bridge company, and a report of his argument to the jury is printed in the pages following the present article. His colleagues as counsel for the defense were Joseph Knox of Rock Island and N. B. Judd of Chicago, while the counsel for the plaintiffs were H. M. Wead of Peoria and T. D. Lincoln of Cincinnati.

The testimony was voluminous, the plaintiffs relying largely upon the statements of steamboat pilots and captains who for the most part declared the

bridge a nuisance and a great obstruction to the navigation of the river. Prominent engineers were called upon the stand by both parties to the suit. In the end, however, the jury failed to agree and was discharged.

The feeling between river and railroad men was naturally not quieted by this outcome of the trial. The House of Representatives of the United States Congress, on January 4, 1858, instructed the Committee on Commerce to inquire if the railroad bridge across the Mississippi River at Rock Island was a serious obstruction to the navigation of that river, and if so to report to the House what action, if any, was necessary on the part of the government to cause such obstruction to be removed.

The committee made the investigation and came to the conclusion that the bridge *did* constitute a material and dangerous obstruction to the navigation of the river but they believed "that the courts have full and ample power to remedy any evil that may exist in that regard. At present they are disinclined to recommend any action by Congress in the premises".

Then came James Ward, a St. Louis steamboat owner, who on May 7, 1858, filed a bill in the United States District Court for the Southern Division of the State of Iowa asking that the bridge be declared a nuisance and ordered removed. Again voluminous testimony was taken. On the final hearing in November, 1859, Judge John M. Love gave his decision



upholding the complaint. He declared the bridge "a common and public nuisance", and ordered the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Company to remove the three piers and their superstructure, which lay within the State of Iowa.

The attitude of Judge Love to the question of river versus railroad is shown in his opinion. "It involves", he said, "a question of public policy as well as private right. We must, therefore, continue the precedent which is to be established". He commented on the fact that Dubuque and Lyons were already contemplating bridges, and that probably McGregor, La Crosse, Muscatine, Burlington, Keokuk, Quincy, Hannibal, and St. Louis would follow. "Thus", he said, "if this precedent be established, we shall probably, in no great period of time, have railroad bridges upon the Mississippi River at every forty or fifty miles of its course." Such an impending catastrophe as this apparently had considerable weight in bringing him to a decision.

The piers, however, were not torn out, for the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Company appealed the case to the United States Supreme Court. An interesting feature of Judge Love's decision lay in the fact that although the river commerce went largely through the Illinois opening and the difficulties of the steamboat men were in the passage of this regular channel east of the turntable pier, the outcome of the suit was to order torn out the Iowa part of the bridge, which side was not used by



steamboats, leaving the turntable and Illinois channel unchanged. The removal of the Iowa piers would in no way better steamboat traffic for the eddy would still exist on the Iowa side as long as the turntable pier was left untouched, and the latter could not be affected by Judge Love's court because it was upon the Illinois side of the boundary. Nevertheless the carrying out of the decree would have effectually put an end to the river crossing, for the old proverb "a half a loaf is better than none" does not apply to bridges.

The appeal came before the United States Supreme Court at its December term, 1862, and that court, though not by a unanimous decision, reversed the decision of the District Court and permitted the bridge to remain. The general attitude of the Court toward bridges is shown in the last paragraph of Judge Catron's opinion. Speaking of the insistence of the river men on the free navigation of the *whole* river from bank to bank, he remarked:

"According to this assumption, no lawful bridge could be built across the Mississippi anywhere. Nor could harbors or rivers be improved; nor could the great facilities to commerce, accomplished by the invention of railroads, be made available where great rivers had to be crossed."

The realization of the necessity of bridge crossings even over navigable streams had become widespread, and each year the railroads found less to fear in their contest on this point with the river interests.

The original bridge, however, did not have a long existence. In the sixties the United States Government resumed the use of the Island for military purposes. This led to an agreement in 1867 between government officials and the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Company, whereby the company was granted a new right of way across the western or lower point of the Island. A new bridge was to be built at this point, the government and the railroad each to bear half the cost, the bridge to be the property of the government and the railroad to have right of way over it. Upon the completion of the new bridge, the old bridge and tracks were to be removed. The new bridge was completed in 1873.

The original bridge across the Mississippi River thus had a life time of less than twenty years. For a decade its stone piers and wooden spans were the focus of a struggle that involved large issues. In 1921 Mr. Henry W. Farnam, of New Haven, a son of the builder of the bridge, visited the scene of his father's construction work. He found on the Island an ancient stone pier overgrown with vegetation — the only relic and monument of the veteran bridge that first spanned the Father of Waters.

JOHN C. PARISH

## Lincoln and the Bridge Case

[On May 6, 1856, the steamer *Effie Afton* was wrecked against the piers of the railroad bridge at Rock Island. This newly constructed bridge was the first to cross the Mississippi, and was a thorn in the flesh to the steamboat men and to the commercial interests of St. Louis. Suit was brought against the bridge company and when the action — entitled *Hurd et al. v. the Railroad Bridge Company* — came before the United States Circuit Court, with Judge John McLean presiding, Abraham Lincoln was one of the attorneys for the bridge company.

A copy of his argument in the case, in the possession of Mr. A. N. Harbert of Iowa City, was kindly loaned to the Society and, through the courtesy of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, was verified with the original report which appeared in the *Chicago Daily Press* for September 24, 1857. In editing the article obvious typographical errors have been corrected but otherwise the newspaper account has not been changed.—THE EDITOR]

THIRTEENTH DAY.

Tuesday, September 22d, 1857.

Hon. Abram Lincoln's Argument.

Court met pursuant to adjournment.

Mr. A. Lincoln addressed the jury: He said he did not purpose to assail anybody, that he expected to grow earnest as he proceeded but not ill-natured. There is some conflict of testimony in the case, but one quarter of such a number of witnesses, seldom agree, and even if all had been on one side some discrepancy might have been expected. We are to try and reconcile them, and to believe that they are not intentionally erroneous, as long as we can. He had

no prejudice against steamboats or steamboatmen nor any against St. Louis, for he supposed they went about as other people would do in their situation. St. Louis as a commercial place, may desire that this bridge should not stand, as it is adverse to her commerce, diverting a portion of it from the river; and it might be that she supposed that the additional cost of railroad transportation upon the productions of Iowa, would force them to go to St. Louis if this bridge was removed. The meetings in St. Louis were connected with this case, only as some witnesses were in it and thus had some prejudice add color to their testimony. The last thing that would be pleasing to him would be to have one of these great channels, extending almost from where it never freezes to where it never thaws, blocked up. But there is a travel from east to west, whose demands are not less important than that of the river. It is growing larger and larger, building up new countries with a rapidity never before seen in the history of the world. He alluded to the astonishing growth of Illinois, having grown within his memory to a population of a million and a half; to Iowa and the other young and rising communities of the Northwest.

This current of travel has its rights, as well as that north and south. If the river had not the advantage in priority and legislation, we could enter into free competition with it and we would surpass it. This particular line has a great importance, and

the statement of its business during a little less than a year shows this importance. It is in evidence that from September 8, 1856, to August 8, 1857, 12,586 freight cars and 74,179 passengers passed over this bridge. Navigation was closed four days short of four months last year, and during this time, while the river was of no use, this road and bridge were equally valuable. There is, too, a considerable portion of time, when floating or thin ice makes the river useless, while the bridge is as useful as ever. This shows that this bridge must be treated with respect in this court and is not to be kicked about with contempt.

The other day Judge Wead alluded to the strife of the contending interests, and even a dissolution of the Union. Mr. Lincoln thought the proper mood for all parties in this affair, is to "live and let live," and then we will find a cessation of this trouble about the bridge. What mood were the steamboat men in when this bridge was burned? Why there was a shouting, a ringing of bells and whistling on all the boats as it fell. It was a jubilee, a greater celebration than follows an excited election.

The first thing I will proceed to is the record of Mr. Gurney and the complaint of Judge Wead, that it did not extend back over all the time from the completion of the bridge. The principal part of the navigation after the bridge was burned passed through the span. When the bridge was repaired and the boats were a second time confined to the

draw, it was provided that this record should be kept. That is the simple history of that book.

From April 19, 1856, to May 6 — seventeen days — there were 20 accidents, and all the time since then there has been but 20 hits, including 7 accidents; so that the dangers of this place are tapering off, and, as the boatmen get cool, the accidents get less. We may soon expect, if this ratio is kept up, that there will be no accidents at all.

Judge Wead said, while admitting that the floats went straight through, there was a difference between a float and a boat, but I do not remember that he indulged us with an argument in support of this statement. Is it because there is a difference in size? Will not a small body and a large one, float the same way, under the same influence? True, a flat boat would float faster than an egg-shell, and the egg-shell might be blown away by the wind, but if under the *same influence* they would go the same way. Logs, floats, boards, various things, the witnesses say all show the same current. Then is not this test reliable? At all depths too, the direction of the current is the same. A series of these floats would make a line as long as a boat, and would show any influence upon any part, and all parts of the boat.

I will now speak of the angular position of the piers. What is the amount of the angle? The course of the river is a curve and the pier is straight. If a line is produced from the upper end of the long



pier straight with the pier to a distance of 350 feet, and a line is drawn from a point in the channel opposite this point to the head of the pier, Col. Mason says they will form an angle of 20 degrees; but the angle if measured at the pier, is 7 degrees — that is, we would have to move the pier 7 degrees, and then it would be exactly straight with the current. Would that make the navigation better or worse? The witnesses of the plaintiffs seemed to think it was only necessary to say that the pier was angling to the current, and that settled the matter. Our more careful and accurate witnesses say, that though they have been accustomed to seeing the piers placed straight with the current, yet, they could see that here the current has been made straight by us, in having made this slight angle — that the water now runs just right that it is straight and cannot be improved. They think that if the pier was changed the eddy would be divided, and the navigation improved; and that as it is, the bridge is placed in the best manner possible.

I am not now going to discuss the question what is a material obstruction? We do not very greatly differ about the law. The cases produced here, are, I suppose, proper to be taken into consideration by the Court in instructing the jury. Some of them I think are not exactly in point, but still I am willing to trust his honor, Judge McLean, and take his instructions as law.

What is *reasonable* skill and care? This is a thing



of which the jury are to judge. I differ from them in saying that they are bound to exercise no more care than they took before the building of the bridge. If we are allowed by the Legislature to build a bridge, which will require them to do more than before, when a pilot comes along, it is unreasonable for him to dash on, heedless of this structure, which has been *legally put there*. The Afton came there on the 5th, and lay at Rock Island until next morning. When the boat lies up, the pilot has a holiday, and would not any of these jurors have then gone around there, and got acquainted with the place? Parker has shown here that he does not understand the draw. I heard him say that the fall from the head to the foot of that pier was four feet! He needs information. He could have gone there that day and have seen there was no such fall. He should have discarded passion, and the chances are that he would have had no disaster at all. He was bound to make himself acquainted with it.

McCammon says that "the current and the swell coming from the long pier, drove her against the long pier". Drove her towards the very pier from which the current came! It is an absurdity, an impossibility. The only reconciliation I can find for this contradiction, is in a current which White says strikes out from the long pier, and then, like a ram's horn, turns back, and this might have acted somehow in this manner.

It is agreed by all that the plaintiffs boat was

destroyed; that it was destroyed upon the head of the short pier; that she moved from the channel, where she was, with her bow above the head of the long pier, till she struck the short one, swung around under the bridge, and there was crowded under the bridge and destroyed.

I shall try to prove that the average velocity of the current through the draw with the boat in it, should be five and a half miles an hour; that it is slowest at the head of the pier,—swiftest at the foot of the pier. Their lowest estimate, in evidence, is six miles an hour, their highest twelve miles. This was the testimony of men who had made no experiment — only conjecture. We have adopted the most exact means. The water runs swiftest in high water, and we have taken the point of nine feet above low water. The water, when the Afton was lost, was seven feet above low water, or at least a foot lower than our time. Brayton and his assistants timed the instruments — the best known instruments for measuring currents. They timed them under various circumstances, and they found the current five miles an hour, and no more. They found that the water, at the upper end, run slower than five miles; that below it was swifter than five miles, but that the average was five miles. Shall men, who have no care, who conjecture, some of whom speak of twenty miles an hour be believed, against those who have had such a favorable and well-improved opportunity? They should not even *qualify* the result. Sev-

eral men have given their opinion as to the distance of the Carson, and I suppose if *one* should go and *measure* that distance, you would believe him in preference to all of them.

These measurements were made when the boat was not in the draw. It has been ascertained what is the area of the cross-section of the stream, and the area of the face of the piers, and the engineers say, that the piers being put there will increase the current proportionably as the space is decreased. So with the boat in the draw. The depth of the channel was 22 feet, the width 116 feet — multiply these and you have the square feet across the water of the draw, viz: 2,552 feet. The Afton was 35 feet wide and drew five feet, making a fourteenth of the sum. Now one-fourteenth of five miles is five-fourteenths of one mile — about one-third of a mile — the increase of the current. We will call the current  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles per hour.

The next thing I will try to prove is that the plaintiff's boat had power to run six miles an hour in that current. It has been testified that she was a strong, swift boat, able to run eight miles an hour up stream in a current of four miles an hour, and fifteen miles down stream. Strike the average and you will find what is her average — about  $11\frac{1}{2}$  miles. Take the  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles which is the speed of the current in the draw, and it leaves the power of the boat in that draw at six miles an hour, 528 feet per minute, and 8 4-5 feet to the second.

Next I propose to show that there are no cross currents. I know their witnesses say that there are cross currents — that, as one witness says, there are three cross currents and two eddies. So far as mere statement without experiment, and mingled with mistakes can go, they have proved. But can these men's testimony be compared with the nice, exact, thorough experiments of our witnesses. Can you believe that these floats go across the currents. It is inconceivable that they could not have discovered every possible current. How do boats find currents that floats cannot discover? We assume the position then that those cross currents are not there. My next proposition is that the Afton passed between the S. B. Carson and Iowa shore. That is undisputed.

Next I shall show that she struck first the short pier, then the long pier, then the short one again and there she stopped. Mr. Lincoln cited the testimony of eighteen witnesses on this point. How did the boat strike Baker [sic] when she went in! Here is an endless variety of opinion. But ten of them say what pier she struck; three of them testify that she struck first the short, then the long, then the short pier for the last time. None of the rest substantially contradict this. I assume that these men have got the truth, because I believe it an established fact.

My next proposition is that after she struck the short and long pier and before she got back to the

short pier the boat got right with her bow out. So says the Pilot Parker — that he “got her through until her starboard wheel passed the short pier”. This would make her head about even with the head of the long pier. He says her head was as high or higher than the head of the long pier. Other witnesses confirmed this one. The final stroke was in the splash door, aft the wheel. Witnesses differ but the majority say she struck thus. Court adjourned.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

Wednesday, September 23, 1857.

Mr. A. Lincoln resumed. He said he should conclude as soon as possible. He said the colored map of the plaintiffs, which was brought in during the advanced stages of the trial, showed itself that the cross currents alledged did not exist; that the current as represented would drive an ascending boat to the long pier, but not to the short pier as they urged. He explained from a model of a boat where the splash door is, just behind the wheel. The boat struck on the lower shoulder of the short pier, as she swung around, in the splash door, then as she went on round she struck the point or end of the pier, where she rested. Her engineers say the starboard wheel then was rushing round rapidly. Then the boat must have struck the upper point of the pier so far back as not to disturb the wheel. It is forty feet from the stern of the Afton to the splash door,

and thus it appears that she had but forty feet to go to clear the pier.

How was it that the Afton, with all her power, flanked over from the channel to the short pier without moving one inch ahead? Suppose she was in the middle of the draw, her wheel would have been 31 feet from the short pier. The reason she went over thus is, her starboard wheel was not working. I shall try to establish the fact that that wheel was not running, and, that after she struck, she went ahead strong on this same wheel. Upon the last point the witnesses agree — that the starboard wheel was running after she struck — and no witnesses say that it was running while she was out in the draw flanking over. Mr. Lincoln read from the testimony of various witnesses to prove that the starboard wheel was not working while she was out in the stream. Other witnesses show that the captain said something of the machinery of the wheel, and the inference is that he knew the wheel was not working. The fact is undisputed, that she did not move one inch ahead, while she was moving this 31 feet sideways. There is evidence proving that the current there is only five miles an hour, and the only explanation is that her power was not all used — that only one wheel was working. The pilot says he ordered the engineers to back her out. The engineers differ from him and say that they kept one [sic] going ahead. The bow was so swung that the current pressed it over; the pilot pressed the stern



over with the rudder, though not so fast but that the bow gained on it, and only one wheel being in motion, the boat merely stood still so far as motion up and down is concerned, and thus she was thrown upon this pier.

The Afton came into the draw after she had just passed the Carson, and, as the Carson no doubt kept the true course, the Afton going around her, got out of the proper way, got across the current, into the eddy which is west of a straight line drawn down from the long pier, was compelled to resort to these changes of wheels, which she did not do with sufficient adroitness to save her. Was it not her own fault that she entered wrong? so far, wrong that she never got right. Is the defence to blame for that?

For several days we were entertained with depositions about boats "smelling a bar". Why did the Afton then, after she had come up smelling so close to the long pier sheer off so strangely? When she got to the centre of the very nose she was smelling, she seemed suddenly to have lost her sense of smell and flanks over to the short pier.

Mr. Lincoln said there was no practicability in the project of building a tunnel under the river, for there is not a tunnel that is a successful project, in the world. A suspension bridge cannot be built so high, but that the chimneys of the boats will grow up till they cannot pass. The steamboatmen will take pains to make them grow. The cars of a railroad, cannot,



without immense expense, rise high enough to get even with a suspension bridge, or go low enough to get down through a tunnel. Such expense is unreasonable.

The plaintiffs have to establish that the bridge is a material obstruction, and that they managed their boat with reasonable care and skill. As to the last point, high winds have nothing to do with it, for it was not a windy day. They must show "due skill and care." Difficulties going down stream, will not do, for they were going upstream. Difficulties with barges in tow, have nothing to do with it, for they had no barge. He said he had much more to say, many things he could suggest to the jury, but he would close to save time.

## Hummer's Bell

Michael Hummer was the first regular pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Iowa City, coming to the little frontier capital in 1841. A faded photograph reveals a man similar in type to Robert Lucas, the first Governor. The face is thin with high cheek bones and an aquiline nose. Heavy and irregular lines cross the high forehead, and the tight-lipped mouth is drawn down at the corners as if he is determined not to smile at any one, least of all at his own mistakes. The deep-set eyes, overshadowed by heavy arched eyebrows express a surprised and pathetic disappointment over his treatment by the world. A serious minded, visionary, and erratic character he seems, a man little fitted for the practical every day life of the frontier. A contemporary characterized him as "a man of vigorous intellect & an orator, but of *ungovernable temper*."

It fell to the lot of Michael Hummer to organize the Presbyterian congregation at Iowa City and build a church in which they might worship and he entered upon his work with confidence and energy. The little group of Presbyterians, however, found it impossible to raise the five thousand dollars needed for the building and the pastor was sent east to raise money among the older and richer congregations, with the agreement that he was to receive his ex-

penses and ten per cent of the money collected. It appears that he made two or three trips on this mission and spent some two years and a half in the East.

Just how much money Mr. Hummer collected is not recorded, nor is it important in this connection. His sojourn in the East, however, had two important results. For one thing he secured the bell for the church building at Iowa City, a coveted possession of all early churches, and at the time of its installation, it is said, the only church bell west of the Mississippi River towns. Naturally the community was proud of its possession and the members of the Presbyterian congregation felt a thrill of pride as each Sabbath morning they listened to its call.

But the visits of Mr. Hummer in the East had another and less fortunate result. Always excitable and somewhat peculiar, an avowed infidel before his conversion, he now embraced Swedenborgianism and soon became a believer in spiritualism. These beliefs, together with his other peculiarities, soon made him unpopular with his congregation and charges of misconduct were preferred against him. He was tried before the presbytery, which he denounced as "a den of ecclesiastical thieves", and in 1848 was expelled from the ministry.

Before leaving Iowa City, however, he made a bargain with the church trustees by which he obtained possession of the communion service, two Bibles, the pulpit furniture, and other movable

property, as part payment of the church's debt to him for unpaid salary. In addition he also received a note for some \$650, secured by a mortgage on the real estate of the church.

Soon after this settlement, Michael Hummer went to Keokuk, where, it is said, he planned a spiritualistic temple or church. Perhaps it was the contemplation of this sanctuary which reminded him that he had forgotten the church bell at Iowa City. Here was an opportunity to revenge himself on the congregation which had rejected him and at the same time secure a bell for his new temple.

Accordingly Mr. Hummer returned to Iowa City late in the summer of 1848, accompanied by J. W. Margrave who had been one of the church trustees but had followed the former pastor to Keokuk. The two men went to the church and Mr. Hummer mounted into the belfry. He unfastened the bell and with ropes and tackle slowly lowered it to the ground.

But this took time and, Iowa City being a small place, a crowd soon collected to see what was happening. The two conspirators apparently did not anticipate so much publicity nor were they prepared for resistance. While Mr. Hummer was still in the belfry unfastening the tackle, Dr. Margrave left the bell unprotected and went off for the team and wagon which were to transport the bell to Keokuk. During his absence some of the spectators decided to play a practical joke on the would-be abductors of

the bell — and at the same time prevent the removal of the treasure from the city.

Having first removed the ladder, thus imprisoning the irate Mr. Hummer in the empty belfry, the Iowa City men, who, it is said, were not members of the congregation, quickly procured a team and having loaded the bell on the wagon, drove rapidly away leaving Mr. Hummer raving and gesticulating while the delighted small boys and other bystanders laughed and gibed at his helpless wrath. Driven almost to frenzy by this treatment the former minister delivered an impromptu sermon more remarkable for its emphatic language than for logic of thought and drove home his points by hurling pieces of scantling, bricks, and loose boards at the crowd below which with characteristic American levity considered the demonstration a huge joke. At last Dr. Margrave returned and released his tormented chief, but the bell was gone, whither Michael Hummer did not know.

Escorted by a number of Iowa City admirers, the bell had been taken up the Iowa River to a point near the mouth of Rapid Creek, where it was sunk in deep water, chained to an elm tree, there to await the settlement of the difficulties between the ex-minister and the congregation. Here the curtain descends on the first act of the comedy.

The incident, of course, attracted much attention in the little frontier community and incidentally had an important effect on the career of one of the

observers. A young man who had watched the proceedings at the church and perhaps followed the chagrined Mr. Hummer about during the remainder of his stay in town, drew a crude cartoon of the events on a sheet of brown paper. This attracted the attention of a man who decided that the rude drawing showed unusual talent. He looked up the artist and assisted him in the development of his talent. This boy was George Yewell, afterwards a noted portrait painter. His cartoon is still preserved in the library of the State Historical Society of Iowa.

This drawing is in seven sections, the first picture portraying the scene at the church, where Michael Hummer is hurling missiles at his tormentors while small boys dance in glee and even one of the horses turns its head in astonishment at the commotion. This is labelled "The Outbreak". The remaining drawings are entitled "The Parson in a Rage", "The Ghost Appearing unto Michael", "Arrival of the Attorney", "Clairvoyance", "The Missionary Sermon", and "The Attorney 'Slopes'".

Below the drawing is a written explanation of the events in the following language:

And it came to pass that Michael did ascend unto the housetop and commence taking down the bell — And the multitude cried out unto him to show by what right he did so: but he did hold his peace.

Now when Michael had lowered the bell even unto the floor of the building lo! the people laid hands on it and carried it away. Then Michael waxed wroth and did say

many naughty things and did cast pieces of wood among the multitude who cried unto him to stop lest he should kill some one. Then Michael raised his voice aloud and cried "Verily, verily, will I kill more of you."

Now when evening was come Michael and his serving-man did go into a room in a public inn. And Michael's wrath was great and he did kick over the chairs and stools insomuch that his serving-man did quake and tremble.—And Michael bade him take a horse and ride to a distant town and hasten back with a cunning man who was a lawyer and then he would fix the rebellious multitude.

When the serving man had departed and night was come, Michael did retire to his bed and lo! about the middle watch he was awakened by a rushing noise. He leaped from his couch and saw a bright light at a far distance coming towards him. And Michael watched it and trembled. It suddenly became of the shape of a huge bell such an one as he did try to take the day past. And it stopped, and a huge face did appear on the top of the bell and did say unto him "*Michael! Michael!! Michael!!!*" And Michael answered "What wilt thou" and it answered "Verily verily will I visit thee in thy slumbers until thou forsake thy wickedness."

Now when the serving man did arrive in the morning with the lawyer, Michael was much down cast because of the visit of the ghost on the past night. Nevertheless they did set themselves to work to devise means to find where the multitude had hid the bell. Finally the serving man did remember that he had a sister who by the means of Clairvoyance could give unto them the information.

And straightway they journeyed unto Keokuk and did hire a learned man who did put the young woman in a



state of Clairvoyance. And then he spake to her saying, "Where is the bell." And she forthwith answered "Verily it is in a well five miles distant S. W. from the town wherein it was placed."

Now Michael's spirits did revive and straightway he sent the cunning man to the town to preach unto the natives and to threaten them.

And he did so and the multitude did laugh at and persecute him. Nevertheless he threatened the wrath of the law, and of the law-loving Michael, but they only laughed the greater until with a sad heart and sorrowful countenance he bade adieu and straightway mounted his horse and without a hat did journey no one knew whither and has not been heard of since.

And also of Michael and his serving-man nothing more can be found. Verily, verily, they shall have their reward.

The serving man in this narrative was probably J. W. Margrave, the attorney was Ralph P. Lowe, afterwards Governor of Iowa, who represented Michael Hummer in the litigation which followed, and the young woman seer was Mary Margrave, a sister of J. W. Margrave. Much seeking failed to reveal the presence of the bell in the Iowa City wells, as suggested by the clairvoyant. It was also rumored that it was buried under the Old Capitol, but the bell was not found.

In the meantime the litigation concerning the church debt dragged on until 1853 when the trustees made a settlement with Mr. Hummer, for whom a guardian had been appointed on the ground that he was "a Monomaniac upon the subject of Communi-

cations with the Spirits of another world . . . and is *therefore* incompetent to take care of his property''. By this agreement Hummer received four hundred dollars in cash, one hundred dollars in one year with interest and costs up to fifty dollars. The missing bell was, however, charged against him so that he became legally the owner of the bell.

But where was the bell? When some of its abductors went to get it, the bell was gone — like many another hidden treasure — and it was not until a number of years afterwards that the mystery was explained by news from Salt Lake City. According to this story, two Mormons who were living in Iowa City at the time and knew the whereabouts of the bell decided to take it with them on their trip to Utah. They resurrected the bell, packed it in sawdust, headed it up in a hogshead, loaded it on an ox wagon, and made off with it across the plains. The clapper, however, was left behind rusting in a cellar.

Having arrived at Salt Lake City the men sold the bell to Brigham Young. Some time later a rumor of the missing bell at Iowa City having reached Salt Lake City, Brigham Young instructed one of his clerks who had a brother at Iowa City to write to him that the owners of the bell might have it, if they proved their ownership and paid the expenses of its return, or he would pay them a "reasonable & fair" price for it. This notice seems to have aroused no enthusiasm at Iowa City. Probably they considered

that the bell now belonged to Michael Hummer. In 1868 Brigham Young himself wrote to S. M. Osmond, then the minister at Iowa City, that the bell "is still laying here idle, as it always has done, and is at your disposal on the same conditions, whenever you please to send for it, accompanied with sufficient evidence that you are authorized to receive it for the congregation for whom it was manufactured". An attempt was made to raise funds for the return of the bell, but the plan failed and the bell remained with the Mormons.

The story of its career, however, has been told and retold for over seventy years. It has even been the inspiration of a song, which was evolved in the following manner. One evening while a group of lawyers were assembled in the bar room at Swan's Hotel in Iowa City, John P. Cook announced that he had prepared a parody on Moore's "Those Evening Bells" and proceeded to sing his composition. The following evening a rival appeared in the person of William H. Tuthill of Tipton who had written three additional verses. These also were sung by Mr. Cook. Here then is the story of the bell as told in song.

"Ah, Hummer's bell! Ah, Hummer's bell!  
How many a tale of woe 'twould tell,  
Of Hummer driving up to town  
To take the brazen jewel down,  
And when high up in his belfre-e,

They moved the ladder, yes, sir-e-e;  
Thus while he towered aloft, they say,  
The bell took wings and flew away.

“Ah, Hummer’s bell! Ah, Hummer’s bell!  
The bard thy history shall tell;  
How at the East, by Hummer’s sleight,  
Donation, gift and widow’s mite,  
Made up the sum that purchased *thee*,  
And placed *him* in the ministry;  
But funds grew low, while dander riz,  
Thy clapper stopped, and so did his.

“Ah, Hummer’s bell! Ah, Hummer’s bell!  
We’ve heard thy last, thy funeral knell,  
And what an aching void is left,  
Of bell and Hummer both bereft.  
*Thou* deeply sunk in running stream,  
*Him* in a Swedenborgian dream,  
Both are submerged, both, to our cost,  
Alike to sense and reason lost.

“Ah, Hummer’s bell! Ah, Hummer’s bell!  
Hidden unwisely, but too well;  
Alas, thou’rt gone, thy silver tone  
No more responds to Hummer’s groan;  
But yet remains one source of hope,  
For Hummer left a fine bell rope,  
Which may be used, if such our luck,  
To noose our friend at Keokuk.”

RUTH A. GALLAHER

## Comment by the Editor

### HISTORY FANS

Many friends have helped us with encouragement and information, with suggestions as to the existence of material, and with material itself. That this support is not entirely local is shown by the fact that two of our history fans — Mr. John P. Irish and Mr. August P. Richter — are now residents of California. Nearer home is Mr. A. N. Harbert of Iowa City. For a generation he has been collecting books and pamphlets upon the history, the literature, and the general interests of the State of Iowa. In particular he has searched far and wide for Iowa railroad material and probably has the largest private collection of such items in existence. He is planning a history of the railroads of the State and has secured data on hundreds of railroads, dead and alive, which have appeared on paper if not always on the prairies of Iowa.

With the materials in his collection he has always been generous. The report of the pleading of Abraham Lincoln in the Rock Island Bridge Case, printed in this number, was loaned to the Society by him, and much of the material upon which the article on the First Mississippi Bridge was based was obtained through his kindness. A number of pamphlets dealing with the bridge cases were tempo-

rarily in the hands of Mr. Harbert, having been loaned by Mr. Henry W. Farnam of New Haven, a son of the president of the bridge company who supervised the construction of the bridge.

Another collector of pamphlets—though long since dead—has given us assistance. James W. Grimes, Governor of Iowa from 1854 to 1858 and United States Senator from 1859 to 1869, gathered and preserved fugitive pamphlets on education, naval affairs, the Civil War, and railroads. Many are out of print and quite unobtainable. In this collection, now in the custody of the State Historical Society of Iowa, are a number of items which, dovetailing into the Farnam collection, enable one to work out a rather consecutive story of the old bridge and its struggle for existence in the United States courts.

#### THE DESPISED PAMPHLET

A word for the unappreciated pamphlet, the shirt sleeve publication that can not appear to advantage in society on the bookshelf, the bane of the librarian who curses it for its miscellaneity and its slovenly appearance and finally in despair stows it away with its own and other kinds in a pamphlet box grave. It deserves a champion for it tells a story that is too short for a book and too long for a newspaper. Who can doubt the influence of the pamphleteers of the French Revolution, the American Revolution, or the World War? Who can tell rightly the story of re-

ligion without a consideration of the despised tract, of politics without the campaign literature, of business without the advertising circulars and the annual reports.

Many events too slender for a book, and many separate phases of important movements, find expression only in unbound pages, and often the gaps and disproportions of history are due to their disappearance. There is no decline of birth rate in pamphlet literature but the high mortality is a matter to be viewed with some anxiety.

J. C. P.





# The **P**ALIMPSEST

JUNE 1922

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THE EDITOR

PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT IOWA CITY BY  
THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

The PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

*Superintendent*

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## THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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PRICE—10c per copy: \$1 per year: free to members of Society  
ADDRESS—The State Historical Society Iowa City Iowa

# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN C. PARISH

ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

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VOL. III

ISSUED IN JUNE 1922

No. 6

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## The Attack on Corinth

### I

#### FIRST DAY

It was the evening of the second day of October, 1862, and the Iowa Brigade was "tenting on the old camp ground" near Corinth, Mississippi, after a brief but victorious campaign at Iuka. There was not a Confederate force within fifty miles of us, and probably not a Confederate soldier. So the wise folks told us, and so we fondly believed. In our regiment at least — the Sixteenth Iowa — there were to be no duties on the morrow, save a few absolutely necessary ones. Everybody was to rest and be happy. "Soldier rest!" was the watchword. With pleasant hallucinations we fell asleep.

"Get up! The long roll's beating!" was the startling alarm at daylight next morning.

We had heard the long roll at Shiloh, without knowing what it meant, but we found out its meaning on that bloody field. It was beating again.

“Fall in, men! Fall in! Fall in quick!” shouted officers everywhere, and the drums beat the assembly on the color line.

Every one jumped up, dressed in haste, belted on his cartridge box, grabbed his gun, and hastened to form line on the company parade ground. We then, with equal zeal, marched out and formed a regimental line. It was not many minutes before the entire brigade was in line of battle, and stood ready for orders. In the distance, and far to the right, heavy skirmishing began. A courier dashed up with orders, and we promptly moved at quick time in the direction of the firing. The morning air was stimulating, and tinged with the breath of southern autumn. Bugles sounded near Corinth, which lay much to the rear of us, and before we had gone half a mile we heard the roar of artillery ahead — not steadily, but at intervals. All around us pealed the opening notes of a general engagement. There was to be fighting, without a doubt, and with the coolness of veterans we marched out to bear our part.

In the preceding April, when we left Pittsburg Landing for the field of combat a few miles away, we cheered at the slightest provocation, sang war songs, and generally made an uproar. Now we marched in silence. Not a sound was heard save our steady tramp and the clink of bayonets. We had been at the front many months and knew that fighting was not a picnic. No school-boy bravado was indulged in. In its place was the business-like readiness for

battle characteristic of trained soldiers. Our course lay through a heavily timbered region destitute of undergrowth; and the trees were in gorgeous autumn regalia. When we had gone about two miles, firing ceased. As we saw no other troops, nor any signs of an enemy, an impression prevailed that only a band of guerrillas had collided with the picket line and been repulsed. We reached an earth fort that contained no guns or garrison. It was a part of Halleck's deserted, unused, and useless line of circumvallation that would have needed a hundred thousand men to hold — at least, to occupy.

Here we stacked arms and awaited an explanation of so serious a morning alarm. Our regiment formed immediately behind the fort. The other three regiments aligned a little to the rear of us. An artillery company soon joined us with four fieldpieces. One gun was wheeled into the fort and its muzzle pushed through an embrasure. Owing to the woods and hills we could see no troops in any direction, either friend or foe. We decided finally that we had been victimized by one of those sudden alarms that are common in war. All regiments stacked arms, and word was sent back to camp for the cooks to boil coffee and bring it out to us. After a long wait they arrived, their capacious kettles swung on poles in Chinese fashion. We had just filled our cups and commenced to quaff the amber beverage when a crash of musketry a mile or so to the front convinced us that we had come on no idle mission. Soon

afterwards a cavalryman rode in rapidly, with dispatches for headquarters, and hastily told us the news. A very large Confederate army was in motion — larger than Albert Sidney Johnston had had at Shiloh — and hot work could be expected. A Wisconsin battalion of six hundred men had been attacked the previous evening at a railroad station called Chewalla, and was then fighting in the woods, but before long would be driven over the intervening country toward us.

“Fall in! Take-Arms! Load at will — Load!” were commands quickly given, and we drove down Minie balls for the advancing host.

Nevertheless we stacked arms again, drank our coffee, and made as good a breakfast as we could. Charley Harl, our company cook, swore that he boiled coffee only in times of peace. He carried his kettles back to camp, returned with a musket, and before evening received a mortal wound. After listening to the firing a while we had orders to change position.<sup>1</sup> We left the fort and drew up on the brow of a heavily timbered hill, more directly in

<sup>1</sup> According to the reports of General Crocker, who was in charge of the brigade, and of the commanding officers of the regiments, the Eleventh and Thirteenth Iowa Infantry regiments formed in line first, supported by the Fifteenth and Sixteenth. In this formation the forenoon passed with only desultory fighting. In the afternoon the Fifteenth and Sixteenth took the position in the front line and these troops then received the desperate assault of the enemy.— *War of the Rebellion: Official Records*, Series I, Pt. II, pp. 359, 364, 365, 366.— THE EDITOR.



the path of the incoming army. No works of any kind gave shelter and we built none. The Fifteenth and Sixteenth Iowa formed side by side, and afterwards fought the Confederates in that order. Commanding the Fifteenth that day was Major Belknap, afterwards a brigadier-general, and still afterwards Secretary of War under President Grant.<sup>2</sup> The Sixteenth was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Add. H. Sanders, afterwards colonel and brigadier, who was severely wounded in this battle. Extra ammunition was dealt out to us, each man having sixty rounds in all.

The Eleventh and Thirteenth Iowa formed in line about fifty yards to the rear of us. The battery was ordered to Corinth, and started at once. In front of the right wing of our regiment was a complete camp—tents, baggage and all—but the troops it belonged to were gone. They had been moved out somewhere to meet the enemy. Not even a guard was left behind. It must have been ten o'clock when deadly fighting commenced directly in front of us—over in the timber.<sup>3</sup> The greater part of the firing we had heard up to this time had been by heavy skirmish lines, but now two lines of battle joined issue, and the terrible roar of musketry pealed through the woods. Till we heard it we had thought

<sup>2</sup> William W. Belknap had been promoted from major to lieutenant colonel on August 1, 1862.—*Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers*, Vol. II, p. 895.—THE EDITOR.

<sup>3</sup> See note 1.—THE EDITOR.

our brigade was the only considerable body of troops in that immediate environ, and that only pickets and skirmishers were scattered along our front. Some other regiment was trying to hold the Chewalla road — probably the one whose deserted camp we saw — and was being roughly handled by the enemy.

We were close enough to hear the combat well, but not close enough to see it. Ridges and woods obstructed the view. We could see smoke floating in the timber, and in partial lulls of the firing could hear the excited commands of officers. The Union troops fought hard, but being greatly outnumbered, fought in vain. It seemed nonsense to have them there at all. A few heavy explosions of musketry broke on the air, in quick succession. Then followed victorious cheers that rang on the morning air with wonderful clearness. The Union troops fled in confusion toward us, the pickets and skirmishers near by joining in the stampede. The enemy followed a short distance, firing and yelling like Indians.

All this time we could see nothing for the ridges and timber, but we could hear so distinctly that we needed no information. The fugitives poured into view like scattered sheep, and reaching our line rushed on to the rear, scores of them being bloody from wounds. Ambulances hurried by, filled and crowded with wounded men, whose cries of suffering and groans of agony it was distressing to hear. Beyond, at intervals, rose the clear, wild cheers of the Southerners.

Then a death like silence ensued. Not a skirmish line was now between us and the enemy. We knew that preparations must be going on to attack us, and to stand idly there awaiting the onset was a trying ordeal — a test of manhood keener than fighting. If I had been richer than Croesus, I would have given a liberal part of my wealth had it not been my duty to be there. While we waited with intense interest and much anxiety the next move in what was to us a momentous drama, an appalling burst of martial thunder came from a locality a mile or more to the right of us. Musketry and artillery mingled in one awful and prolonged peal. It was not an affair of a regiment or two, but seemed like the collision of two heavy lines of battle, and the roar was incessant as long as I was conscious of listening to it. Our thoughts, however, were almost immediately concentrated on events in front of us. We were watching the opposite hillside. Bullets began to cut the air from the rifles of unseen marksmen. A little later a long line of rebel skirmishers came into view, and without haste, and yet without hesitation, marched silently toward us.

“Don’t fire on those men — they’re not rebels”, some one shouted. (Many of them wore portions of our uniform.)

Before this could be contradicted a Confederate brigade appeared, moving in splendid order. At this delicate juncture word came for our brigade to march to Corinth. It was too late for all to go,

without danger of disaster, and the two rear regiments marched from the field, and the Fifteenth and Sixteenth remained to check the enemy. While the Confederate line was moving down the opposite hillside in "battle's magnificently stern array", another hostile brigade appeared, considerably to the rear of the first one. Both marched at common time, in perfect silence, preserving faultless lines. In spite of the great excitement I was under, I admired the soldierly conduct of these troops. It would be impossible for infantry to march to battle in finer order or with firmer mien. On reaching the base of the hill, they marched up the slope toward us. The skirmishers in front of them entered the regimental camp I have spoken of, and began throwing down the Sibley tents that the line of battle might march over the ground without being disarranged.

We might have killed many of these skirmishers, for the tents nearest to us were not more than thirty yards distant, but as we desired the tents down also, we allowed the work to proceed undisturbed, and permitted the skirmishers to retire when the task was finished. When the tents were all flat on the ground, however, and the enemy was boldly moving in plain sight straight at us, and each moment was getting nearer, officers had extreme difficulty in keeping the men from opening fire. We had been ordered not to fire till the lieutenant-colonel gave the word, and it seemed that the word would never be given. Captains and lieutenants walked up and

down the front of their companies, sword in hand, striking up muskets that were being brought to a level by nervously impatient soldiers.

At length the front Confederate line was within fifty or sixty paces of us, and with perfect distinctness we saw the men of that line cock their muskets to fire. Ours were already cocked. We took deliberate aim, and with a crash we fired. That volley told with effect on the enemy. It was scarcely a moment before an answering volley hurled bullets among us. The Fifteenth Iowa fired at about the same time, and the battle opened with fury; but it was less trying to fight than to stand like statues waiting for the fray to begin. In a moment a wall of dust and smoke arose in front of us, and hid the enemy from view.

In our first battle we had sought shelter, as far as possible, behind trees and obstacles. On this occasion the result of incessant drilling we had gone through was apparent. A few men fought on one knee, but not a man lay down, and the great majority stood erect on the color line, and loaded and fired in drill-ground fashion. Habit is second nature. Men hit while fighting erect are less liable to have fatal wounds, than if struck while fighting on one knee. Once, while standing erect, I turned my left side to the enemy, to drive down a musket ball. The next instant a big bullet passed through my left pantaloons pocket, where I carried a package of ten rounds of ammunition. It tore the paper cartridges to pieces, but I was unhurt. Had I been facing

squarely to the front I would have had a mortal wound.

After we had been fighting awhile a gust of air partly blew the smoke aside, and we saw that the enemy's line was not in perfect order, but the second line came up and more than restored the tide of battle. As we fought at remarkably short range, many of us rammed down two Minie balls with each load of powder. There was little chance of taking exact aim, beyond calculating what would probably be too high or too low to hit a man, and under the circumstances two bullets were better than one. The direct attack of the enemy had been really checked, but flank firing opened on us, and indications appeared that an attempt would be made to capture us. Both regiments receded in slight disorder, falling back fifty or sixty yards or so. We couldn't whip the whole of Price's army.

The command was then given to cease firing, and a new and perfect line was formed. The enemy ceased firing also, and with "arms at a shoulder" we again silently tendered battle. For some reason the mute challenge was not accepted, no advance toward us was attempted, nor did skirmishers even annoy us with desultory shots. The fray being apparently over, for a time at least, and the sound of fighting elsewhere having almost ceased, we again had orders to march to Corinth. We moved off the field at common time, in perfect order, and so far as we could see, no one pursued us. Our dead we left,



and a very few of our wounded were captured, but fell into our hands two days afterwards. The other two regiments had marched out of sight. We saw no soldiers anywhere, friend or foe.

Retreating to town displeased us, for we knew nothing of the military situation. We had wondered greatly that half the brigade, and the battery, should be ordered away just before the action commenced. Reinforcements, we thought, should rather have reached us. We know that fighting had ceased everywhere; we had fears of disaster, and many believed our forces were hastily deserting Corinth. Utter disgust was expressed, and even rage, and I heard several officers prophesy that we would be on the road to Pittsburg Landing before nightfall. We had no definite ideas concerning the number of Union troops in Corinth and around it, nor did we even know what general was in chief command. Most of us thought Grant was. Concerning everything important we seemed to be in the dark completely. The army was falling back unnecessarily, we thought, and without a proper struggle. A catastrophe somewhere else in the country was the general explanation.

“Buell’s been cleaned out in Kentucky”, our second lieutenant said. Gloomy apprehensions prevailed.

For several miles we marched in silence through the woods, the occasional roar of artillery indicating that resistance to the enemy had not wholly ceased.



Suddenly, as we came to the verge of a timbered ridge, a thrilling spectacle burst into view. From that point to town the trees had been freshly cut away, and were lying as they fell, the long boughs being lopped off and strewn on the ground. On a hill crest opposite us was a newly built earth fort, and high over its ramparts a large and beautiful garrison flag waved — “Old Glory” in richest attire, tossing its folds in defiance of the foe. We burst into cheers, hailing the scene as evidence that the battle had not been lost but had only begun.

The sight awoke enthusiasm. As we came nearer town we saw that a semi-circle of earth forts had been hastily reared, and mounted with heavy siege guns that commanded all approaches. The gleam of arms could be seen in every direction as troops poured into the fortified semi-circle and aligned at their designated stations. Instead of consternation and retreat we beheld order, and formidable preparations for the foe. General Rosecrans rode up to meet us, and we greeted him with tumultuous cheers. In a brief address he promised us victory on the morrow, a promise that was gloriously fulfilled.

Our regiment was immediately assigned to support the Fifth Ohio Battery, on the extreme left wing of the army. Without halting a moment we marched to our place. Supporting a battery is not always child’s play. On the field of Shiloh we saw a captured Confederate battery where every cannonier was killed and every horse killed or wounded,

At Iuka the Sixteenth Iowa supported the Eleventh Ohio Battery. Van Dorn's Texan Legion took its guns twice, and made a third attempt to take them, but failed. Without assistance from other troops the Sixteenth took them back each time, and held them at last, winning the highest honors of the battle. Three guns were spiked by the enemy, and two were dragged some distance away, but were dragged back again. All the battery horses were killed or wounded, and of an artillery company of eighty men, only eight men escaped wounds or death.

The dangers of a mounted officer exceed those of a soldier. In two battles inside of fifteen days, every field officer of our regiment had been killed or wounded. Lawrence, our splendid young adjutant, had been killed, and our colonel, lieutenant-colonel and major wounded. The colonel had been sent north, Lieutenant-Colonel Sanders was in a hospital, and Major William Purcell (of Muscatine), despite a troublesome wound (his second in the war), assumed command of the regiment.

While we had been fighting on the Chewalla road, our tents, baggage, and equipment had been hauled to town, and at nightfall the enemy's troops slept on our old camp ground — the "fortunes of war".

## II

### SECOND DAY

Early in the morning of the second day the rush of Confederate shells and their explosions awoke us.

It was barely daylight. History says it was three o'clock. A field battery in the edge of the woods, about two hundred yards to the front of Robinett, opened a cannonade, and one of the forts replied. The southern guns were hastily dragged into the woods, and one was captured. Drums rolled and bugles sounded. We belted and got into line. In the woods opposite us a cloud of Confederate sharpshooters deployed. Crouching behind logs, stumps, and trees, they began blazing away at everything and everybody. Similar operations ensued no doubt all along the front of the army. We should have made rifle-pits the previous evening, but did not do so. Our line of battle stretched from one fort to the other, without defenses. A remarkable circumstance of this battle was that the Union troops faced to the north and the Confederate troops to the south.

At the extreme left of the Union line was Fort Phillips. Our regiment was on a low hill immediately to the left of it, supporting the Fifth Ohio Battery. The next fort to the right of Phillips was Robinett, which played a memorable part that day. It was not more than five hundred yards from us, and we could look across and see everything that took place inside of it, and could also see a part of the ground in front of it. This gave us opportunity, in due time, to view a more thrilling combat than ever took place in the gladiatorial arena of Rome.

The Confederate sharpshooters gave us much trouble. The Ohio battery opened on them finally,

but they treated the cannonade with contempt, wounded a few cannoniers, and dismounted the captain by killing his splendid war steed. A heavy detail was promptly made, and a considerable number of men scattered in the fallen timber at the front, and opened on the sharpshooters. I happened to be one of this party. We improved matters considerably, and a Confederate battery tried to drive us out with grape and canister. Fort Phillips intervened with twenty-pound shells and drove the battery into the woods. Thus hot skirmishing went on in different fashions all day long. At most localities it was not very far from one line to the other.

On battle days, where one excitement follows another in swift succession, time moves with rapid pace. On the extreme right of the Union army, movements of importance began. The Union forts and batteries in that quarter opened with fury. We had seldom heard such a cannonade, and knew that something startling was in progress. Clouds of smoke rose thickly above the firing, and ere long a frightful crash of musketry denoted that infantry had engaged. Our whole line in that quarter had fired a volley, which was immediately followed by the smooth roar of steady fighting. The enemy's troops had come out of the woods in a huge column shaped like a wedge. Under a fearful artillery fire they advanced in the most intrepid manner. Missiles tore through the ranks with hideous effect. Grape, canister, musketry — nothing stopped the storming column.

At the first shock eight or ten Union regiments broke and fled; Fort Richardson was taken, and Confederate soldiers entered the very tent of Rosecrans — but he was not there. At the head of his staff he had galloped among the fugitives, and brought them to a halt. At this critical moment the Fifty-sixth Illinois Infantry charged the enemy, fired a deadly volley at close quarters, and then used the bayonet till Fort Richardson was retaken and had opened its guns on the foe. Led by Rosecrans the rallied regiments hurried to the line, and then the whole Union right wing charged with thrilling cheers, driving the enemy, in panic and confusion, into the woods.

The enemy's plan had been for Van Dorn to assault Robinett at the same time that Price delivered his tremendous blow at our right wing. For some reason Van Dorn was not ready, and Price was hurled back with slaughter. Soon afterwards a storming column of four or five thousand men moved on Robinett. Colonel Rogers of Texas had the perilous honor of leading. From our station on the skirmish line we saw the charge — one of the most heroic affairs of the Civil War. With defiant yells the Confederates came out of the woods on the double-quick. Mounted on a powerful steed Rogers rode at their head, waving the lone star flag of Texas. Fallen timber everywhere rendered perfect lines impossible, and the column was soon somewhat disordered, but this proved immaterial. Rogers rode rapidly along a highway that led to the fort,

and his men followed closely, some in the road and others leaping over fallen trees and rubbish, intent on victory at any cost. The sharpshooters of the enemy quit firing, and stood on stumps and logs to watch the charge, and we on the skirmish line did likewise.

The moment the column came into full view, it was swept with terrible effect by the heavy guns of Robinett. Fort Phillips also opened, and each moment some additional fort or battery tried to train guns on the stormers. Smoke, dust, and the explosion of shells more or less concealed the column from view, but we could see that the storm of death was disregarded. The ground was strewn with dead and dying, but Rogers rode undaunted, and not one of the stormers faltered. Death or victory was their evident intention. We could see every move in and around the fort. Not a man left his post. The cannoniers loaded and fired to the last moment, then snatched up muskets and fought as infantry. Rogers reached the ditch of the fort, tossed his banner to a soldier, who planted it on the work. It waved there a moment and fell. Rogers fell also. The last cannon fired killed him and blew his horse to pieces.

On either side the fort Union infantry fought fiercely, and one regiment half-wheeled and enfiladed the front of the fort. The Confederates recoiled and crouched to the ground, but supporting troops came yelling to the rescue, brandishing arms and rushing to the charge. Blue and gray closed in a death struggle, and the fighting was brutal. The Sixty-



third Ohio stood next to the fort, on the right, and lost half its men in a few moments, but never gave up an inch of ground. The Confederates staggered back, stood irresolute, and then turned to fly. The cannoniers sprang to their guns, and, double-loading them, filled the air with missiles. The ditch of the fort was piled level with dead, and fugitives, throwing themselves among fallen timber, waved their hats for quarter. Firing ceased, and many prisoners were taken. Of the entire storming column, not five hundred got back to the woods. The rest were killed, wounded, or captured. Most were killed or wounded. A down-east historian says that "more than two hundred Confederates fell in this frightful assault". Not less than a thousand were killed in front of Robinett. The body of Colonel Rogers was given separate and honorable burial. A board was placed at his grave on which was inscribed his name and rank, and his fame filled both armies. No man ever led a forlorn hope with greater courage.

People who rave over the "horrors of war", and view soldiers with aversion, will find in the ferocity of the fighting at Corinth an object lesson for their teachings. Let us bear in mind, however, that if the armies of the North had been beaten in the Civil War, human slavery would have spread over the greater part of the western hemisphere, if not over the greater part of the world. This is to say nothing of the dissolution of the Union. To avert such calamities was worth all the blood it cost.



War would be “glorious”, perhaps, if a soldier always won, and passed through dangers unharmed. How it feels to be on the other side of a “glorious” affair is seldom told by historians. An Alabama officer who took part in that desperate assault on Fort Robinett, and survived, and who kept a private journal, wrote out his experience that evening, with everything fresh in his mind. His vivid recital found its way into a Northern newspaper, probably with his consent. He thus portrayed the charge:

*“Saturday, October 4 — Eventful day! At four o’clock this morning our brigade was ordered to the left about a quarter of a mile, and halted. We deployed a skirmish line that kept up a constant fire on the enemy. A Confederate battery in front of the right wing of our regiment opened briskly, and the enemy replied in the same manner. The cannonading was heavy for an hour and a half. Our regiment laid down on the ground, and bore the fire nobly. The shells flew thick and fast, cutting off large limbs from the trees, and filling the air with iron fragments. Many shells burst within twenty feet of me. It was extremely unpleasant, and I prayed for forgiveness of my sins, and made up my mind to go through the tempest.*

*“Col. Sawyer called for volunteers to assist the Second Texas skirmishers. I volunteered and took my company. Captain Perkins and Lieutenant Munson being taken sick directly after the severe bombardment, I led the company all the time. I*

went skirmishing at 7:30 a. m. and returned at 9:30. Four of Captain Foster's men were killed, but none of mine. The enemy fired very fast. We got behind trees and logs, and the way bullets did fly was unpleasant indeed. I think twenty must have passed within a few feet of me, humming busily. Shells tore off large limbs, and splinters struck my tree several times. We could only move from tree to tree by crouching close to the ground. Oh! how anxiously I watched for the bursting of shells when the heavy roar proclaimed their coming.

“At 9:30 I had my skirmishers relieved by Captain Rouser's company. I sent my men to their places, and went behind a log with Major Furger. At ten o'clock the fight opened in earnest, on our right. In a few moments the left went into action, in splendid style, under Price. At 10:15 Colonel Rogers of Texas rode by, merely saying: ‘Alabama forces.’ Our regiment, with the rest of the brigade, then rose, unmindful of shot and shell, and moved forward about two hundred and fifty yards and, rising the crest of the hill, the whole of Corinth, with its enormous fortifications, burst upon our view. The United States flag was floating over the forts and over the town.

“We were now met by a perfect storm of grape and canister, cannon shot and Minie balls. O, God! I never saw the like. The men fell like grass. Giving one tremendous cheer, we dashed to the bottom of the hill on which the fort was situated. Here we

found every foot of ground strewn with large trees and brush. Looking to the right and left I saw several brigades charging at the same time. What a sight! I saw men who were running at full speed stop suddenly, and fall on their faces, with their brains scattered all around; others with their legs or arms cut off. I gave myself to God, and got in front of my company. The ground was literally strewn with mangled corpses. One ball passed through my pants and another cut twigs close to me. It seemed that by holding out my hand I could have caught a dozen bullets.

“We pushed forward, nevertheless, charging, as it were, into the mouths of cannon. I rushed to the ditch of the fort and jumped into it, and climbed half way up the sloping wall. The Yankees were only two or three feet from me on the other side, but could not shoot me for fear of being shot themselves. Our men were in the same predicament. There were five or six on the wall, and thirty or forty in and around the ditch. Catesby, my companion, was on the wall beside me. A man within two feet of me put his head cautiously up to shoot into the fort, but suddenly dropped his musket, and his brains were dashed in a stream over my fine coat, which I had in my arms. Several men were killed, and rolled down the embankment. [A Union regiment next to the fort had made a right half-wheel, and thus enfiladed the front of the fort.] Some of our men cried ‘put down the flag’, whereon it was

lowered or shot into the ditch. Oh! we were butchered like dogs, for we were not supported.

“Some one placed a white handkerchief on Sergeant Buck’s musket, and he took it to a port hole, but the Yankees snatched it off and took him prisoner. The men were falling ten at a time. The ditch being full, and finding that we had no chance, we, the survivors, tried to save ourselves as best we could. I was so far up I could not get off quickly. I do not recollect seeing Catesby after this, but think he got off before. I trust in God he did. I and Captain Foster started together, and the air was literally filled with hissing balls. I got about twenty steps as quick as I could, about a dozen men being killed in that distance. I fell down and crawled behind a large stump. Just then I saw poor Foster throw up his hands, and, saying ‘Oh! my God!’ he jumped about two feet off the ground and fell on his face. The top of his head seemed to cave in, and blood spurted straight up several feet. I could see men falling as they attempted to run, some with their heads blown to pieces, and others with the blood streaming down their backs. Oh! it was horrible. One poor fellow, being almost on me, told me his name, and asked me to take his pocket book, and if I escaped, to give it to his mother, and to tell her that he died like a brave man. I asked him if he was a Christian. He said he was. I asked him to pray, which he did with the cannons thundering a deadly accompaniment. Poor fellow! I forgot his request

in subsequent excitement. His legs were literally cut to pieces. As our men retreated the enemy poured into us a terrific fire. I was hardly thirty feet from the mouths of the cannons. Minie balls filled the stump I was behind, and shells burst within three or four feet of me. One was so close that it burnt my face with powder. Grape-shot knocked large pieces from my stump, gradually wearing it away. I endured the horrors of death for one half hour. Fresh Confederate troops advanced with cheers to storm the fort, but began firing when half way up, and I found myself under the fire of both sides. In the first charge our men did not fire a shot, but charged across the ditch and up to the mouths of the cannon. The men of this second line were shot down like hogs. They could not stand the storms that came from the Yankee's thundering guns. They had no chance whatever. All around me were surrendering. I could do no better than follow suit, but, thank God, I am unhurt. Nothing but a merciful Providence saved me."

Cheers of triumph and defiance rolled along the Union lines, and rang from every fort and regiment. The most reckless endeavors of the foe had been foiled, and thousands of prisoners had been taken. At daylight next morning, we started in headlong chase of Price's army.

CLINT PARKHURST

## A Letter

[The following letter is printed from the original which was loaned to the Society by Mr. W. T. Whitney of Waterloo, to whom it was written. It is of interest not only because of the writer, Mr. Theodore N. Vail, late president of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, but also because of its reference to the late "Pop" Anson who did his early ball playing on an Iowa team.—THE EDITOR]

Jany 1, 1917

Jekyl Island Club,  
Brunswick, Georgia.

Dear Mr Whitney

How glad I am to hear from you. I often think of you and the old talks we used to have, for you were a philosopher and had an uncommon sensible grip on the realities of life, some of which I hope I assimilated.

From what you say you are just 10 years older than I am—I am 71 will be 72 this year in July. Waterloo was a curious dividing point in my life—just 21 when I went there—think of it 51 years coming March next. Sometimes as I look back I wish I had stayed in Waterloo and taken my chances there. Not that I have any reason to complain for my life has been busy and I have done my share of work, but when you get to a point where responsibility is loaded on you, and you are really conscientious about it, it makes you feel tired sometimes, and you wish you could shut down your office desk

lock your official door & just take a real rest once in a while.

I knew Dorsey very well; he was Senator from Arkansas when I was in the P. O. D. but never had any relations except official ones with him. I think probably you have heard of my relation with General Brady who was 2nd asst P. M. G. when I was in Washington & was brought into the P. O. scandal "Star Route" along with Dorsey. One of the most dastardly political acts ever perpetrated — but that is neither here nor there. Brady was in the Dept & after I went into the telephone loaned me 50000 to buy & carry some telephone stock — on shares, and both of us made money. Years after when they commenced to prosecute him he was broken in pocket, and because I loaned him money to defend himself their attorneys used to say that I must have been one of them but they never went so far as making any public accusation.

Dorsey was on trial at the same time with Brady & Ingersoll was their attorney. Some one told me the other day that Dorsey was still alive.

I am somewhat broken up this winter myself. Have had a very strenuous year. I hope some day it will be my good fortune to see you again, for there are few, if any, of those I knew when young that I think of oftener or more pleasantly than of you. Do you remember that on that Marshalltown trip *Anson* afterwards the famous baseball player was Captain of the team (Marshalltown). I have often wondered



if I would have become famous as he if I had stuck to baseball. I saw Miller at Los Angeles last year. You remember he was in the team and so was Mul-lan, after whose father, I suppose the street you live on was named. Good luck to you

THEO N. VAIL

## Comment by the Editor

### THE PASSING OF THE PRAIRIE

Within the last month we have had the pleasure of listening to and talking with two men who have portrayed in fiction the Iowa of an earlier day — Hamlin Garland and Herbert Quick. Each has seen with his own eyes the breaking of the original prairies and even had a part in the process; and each is stirred with the glory of the beauty of that life that passed with the coming of the plow.

They are temperamentally different — these two men — but each writes faithfully of the thing as he sees it. “I hate a cow!” says Hamlin Garland with feeling, and the “cinnamon hog” to him is anathema. Herbert Quick, however, is more sympathetic. In *Vandemark’s Folly* he writes:

“Any stockman knows that a cow is a beast of very high nervous organization, but she has no very large number of ways of telling us how she feels: just a few tones to her lowing, a few changes of expression to her eye, a small number of shades of uneasiness, a little manner with her eyes, showing the whites when troubled or letting the lids droop in satisfaction — these things exhausted, and poor bossy’s tale is told.”

But when Garland forgets these tame animals he has known and reverts to the wilder animals and the

untamed prairie, the beauty and sympathy of his descriptions are scarcely to be excelled. Witness these sentences from *A Son of the Middle Border*:

“Nothing could be more generous, more joyous, than these natural meadows in summer. The flash and ripple and glimmer of the tall sunflowers, the myriad voices of gleeful bobolinks, the chirp and gurgle of red-winged blackbirds swaying on the willows, the meadow-larks piping from grassy bogs, the peep of the prairie chick and the wailing call of plover on the flowery green slopes of the uplands made it all an ecstatic world to me. It was a wide world with a big, big sky which gave alluring hint of the still more glorious unknown wilderness beyond.”

Into these meadows came the breaking plow and Garland writes of the results with keen emotion:

“At last the wide ‘quarter section’ lay upturned, black to the sun and the garden that had bloomed and fruited for millions of years, waiting for man, lay torn and ravaged. The tender plants, the sweet flowers, the fragrant fruits, the busy insects, all the swarming lives which had been native here for untold centuries were utterly destroyed. It was sad and yet it was not all loss, even to my thinking, for I realized that over this desolation the green wheat would wave.”

And Herbert Quick, who laments the prairie as vanished forever, is stirred by the same deep appreciation of the beauty of the original Iowa country. Putting his own ideas into the thoughts of young Jacob Vandemark as he first looked out upon the

prairies of northeastern Iowa in the fifties, he says:

“I shall never forget the sight. It was like a great green sea. The old growth had been burned the fall before, and the spring grass scarcely concealed the brown sod on the uplands; but all the swales were coated thick with an emerald growth full-bite high, and in the deeper, wetter hollows grew cowslips, already showing their glossy, golden flowers. The hillsides were thick with the woolly possblummies in their furry spring coats protecting them against the frost and chill, showing purple-violet on the outside of a cup filled with golden stamens, the first fruits of the prairie flowers; on the warmer southern slopes a few of the splendid bird’s-foot violets of the prairie were showing the azure color which would soon make some of the hillsides as blue as the sky; and standing higher than the peering grass rose the rough-leafed stalks of green which would soon show us the yellow puccoons and sweet-williams and scarlet lilies and shooting stars, and later the yellow rosin-weeds, Indian dye-flower and goldenrod. The keen northwest wind swept before it a flock of white clouds; and under the clouds went their shadows, walking over the lovely hills like dark ships over an emerald sea.”

The ancient prairie, so real and wonderful to the first comers, has vanished, and with its passing have gone much that was wild and picturesque and beautiful, and also much that was a source of dread and anxiety. The buffalo and the bear were not alien to the Iowa country but their real home was farther

west and they can hardly be said to have waited for the coming of the settler. The deer, however, lingered in the land between the rivers and for many years the prairie chicken let the frontier slip past and the prairie wolf skulked reluctantly away from the advancing hordes of his enemies.

The loneliness of the wide prairies, away from the streams, for a time kept them unmolested but stout hearted pioneers ventured out upon the sea of waving grass and turned the prairie sod. And when the plow had laid out its black acres the prairie fire, with its fantastic and awful beauty, no longer found fuel for its devastating sweep. Even the pitiless blizzard lost many of its terrors when fences and windbreaks and frequent habitations spread over the land.

People and more people came, by wagon and finally by railroad, and acre by acre the primitive gave way. Yet here and there fragments of the prairie foliage still remain. Curiously enough the very factor that helped the invasion of the prairie land and made possible its widespread conquest is the one that has preserved these relics of the struggle; for the original flowers and sod of the old Iowa prairie, like prisoners of war, are to be found along the right of way of the older railroads.

#### IOWA FROM A CAR WINDOW

Recently we rode across a part of Iowa on a glorious sunny morning, when the landscape had been

freshly washed by a rain of the day before. The alternation of green and brown fields stretched wide under the blue sky. The corn was just creeping up into the sunlight. Here and there oak groves with wild flowers growing in the shade beneath whirled past us; and off toward the horizon the darker green of a strip of wood turned to a bluish haze where it met the sky.

The little towns and the clusters of farm buildings were but incidental to the general scheme of nature. The roads and fences did not so much interrupt as tie the whole scene together. True, one might see anywhere, surrounded by small round-bellied pigs, the "cinnamon hog", couchant upon a field of drab, but if one did not care for this particular heraldic design he could find a more idyllic pastoral scene in the next field where sheep grazed in the company of little wobble-legged lambs. Nor could one fail to note that the neighboring fence posts were surmounted by swamp blackbirds, gorgeous in their red and black livery, and by meadow larks warbling their happy hearts out as freely as did their ancestors on the swaying weeds of the unbroken prairie.

After all the changes have perhaps not been so great. Time will never change the arch of blue sky, nor will the cloud shadows that Vandemark observed cease to ride across the hills. The passing years can have little effect upon the winding streams and the smooth undulations of the landscape. And doubtless our children's children as they ride across Iowa will

still be able to watch the sunlight dance upon the rippling leaves of oak groves, while meadow larks and red-winged blackbirds sing the same song from the fence posts, and the wild flowers and grasses of the right of way whirl by in a riot of profusion and color — faithful reminders of the old time Iowa prairie.

J. C. P.



The

# PALIMPSEST

JULY 1922

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THE EDITOR

PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT IOWA CITY BY  
THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

The PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

*Superintendent*

## THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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PRICE—10c per copy: \$1 per year: free to members of Society

ADDRESS—The State Historical Society Iowa City Iowa

# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN C. PARISH

ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

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VOL. III

ISSUED IN JULY 1922

No. 7

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## Liquor and the Indians

Nearly three hundred years ago a Jesuit priest of Canada — Father Le Jeune — wrote to his superior about the sale of liquor to the Indians. His comments, which follow, appeared in the *Jesuit Relations* for 1637 in a discussion of the increasing death rate of the red men:

It is attributed to the beverages of brandy and wine, which they love with an utterly unrestrained passion, not for the relish they experience in drinking them, but for the pleasure they find in becoming drunk. They imagine in their drunkenness that they are listened to with attention, that they are great orators, that they are valiant and formidable, that they are looked up to as Chiefs, hence this folly suits them; there is scarcely a Savage, small or great, even among the girls and women, who does not enjoy this intoxication, and who does not take these beverages when they can be had, purely and simply for the sake of being drunk. Now as they drink without eating, and in great excess, I can easily believe that the maladies which are daily tending to exterminate them, may in part arise from that.

During that century the question of prohibition was often discussed. Not, however, as far as the white men were concerned — that would be preposterous. They merely twisted the Biblical injunction to read: "Look not upon the wine when you are red." The priests, who lived and worked intimately with the Indian tribes were the ones who most vehemently called attention to the evils of the traffic. The merchants were of a different mind, hence the movement toward prohibition made little headway. But in one case at least the liquor traffic was made a question of state and discussed in a council called by order of King Louis the Fourteenth.

In 1678 there met in the Chateau St. Louis at Quebec a group of the most prominent men of New France — called together by order of the king who had asked Governor Frontenac to get the opinion of the principal men of the colony on the question of selling liquor to the Indians. The delegates included La Salle — well known already although his exploration of the Mississippi Valley was still a matter of future history — and Louis Jolliet, intrepid companion of Father Marquette in the famous trip down the Great River five years before. Twenty men in all faced the question as to whether the sale of wine, brandy, and other intoxicating liquors to the Indians should be allowed in the towns and in the Indian country, or prohibited under heavy penalties.

Each man separately gave his opinion and a

procès verbal was drawn up embodying these statements. Perhaps the bald statement of Du Gué sounded the real key note of those who favored continuing the trade. "The trade in brandy is absolutely necessary," he wrote, "in order to draw the Indians into the French Colonies and prevent them from taking their furs to other nations." The nations whose competition the French feared were Holland and England, for the fur traders from the English colonies and from the Dutch settlements on the Hudson River had pushed their operations far into the Indian's country.

Business no doubt stood in the way of the suppression of the liquor traffic, but many other arguments were paraded as justification by the Canadian merchants. Some contended manfully that it was in the interests of the Indian's soul that he be given liquor, since if the French did not so supply him he would turn to the Dutch and English for liquid consolation and through contact with them would either remain in his own idolatry or take up with the evil and heretical beliefs of those two nations. And others contended that only by allowing the Indian the same liberties as the whites could they draw him into Christianity.

One man gave as his reason for advocating the continuance of the trade the fact that the French brandy was far superior to the Dutch variety to which they would otherwise turn; and they did not forget to use the time-honored argument that prohi-

bition would bring forth the bootlegger. If the trade were banned by order of the king, the *coureurs de bois* and vagabonds would carry on illegal and very harmful operations in the distant Indian camps, selling poor liquor and demanding high prices.

La Salle was among those who believed in the continuation of the trade, urging that it was necessary not only for commercial reasons but also for the preservation of peace in New France. He invoked the aid of statistics to further his argument. The normal beaver trade of Canada during a year was from sixty to eighty thousand beavers and the Indians who bought liquor numbered about twenty thousand. Since a beaver skin was ordinarily worth a pint of brandy, a fourth or a third of the entire trade might be carried on in liquor without making it possible for the Indians to get drunk more than once a year. La Salle, however, with vigorous ideas of discipline, believed in punishing severely any disorders arising from intoxication.

Jolliet was of a different opinion. With regard to the transportation of liquor into the woods — and no one knew the Indian country in those days better than he — it seemed to him necessary to prohibit it upon pain of death; but he would allow the sale to Indians by the habitants in their own houses and stores in the settlements, provided it could be carried on with moderation and with every effort to avoid making the Indians drunk. And Jacques La Ber — merchant of Montreal — agreed with him.



Three other men declared against the sale of liquor to the red men either in town or country. But out of the score of men who gave their opinion, full fifteen were in favor of continuing the trade without let or hindrance.

So the traffic continued. It is not surprising that the large majority of the leaders of New France should favor it. Aside from their thorough belief that their business interests were inseparably bound up with this trade, the use of liquor was a matter of course in their own lives. It appealed to them not as a moral question but as a question of expediency.

As the Frenchmen came down into the Mississippi Valley they brought brandy and wines with them. They were staple articles of trade and they facilitated conferences. The Indians had taught the whites the art of smoking a pipe and with this friendly rite they opened all peace negotiations. The whites taught the red men the use of their more potent peace-maker, but they could not limit its influence to the happy calling of pacification.

And when Iberville in 1699 came into the other end of the Valley at the mouth of the river, he brought liquor to the southern tribes. Inviting a group of Indians on board his ship one day he fired off the ship's cannon for them and gave them a drink of *eau de vie* or brandy; and he tells of the amazement of the Indians at the roar of the engines of warfare and at the liquor which burned after they had drunk it.



For a hundred years more the sale or barter of liquor to the Indians went on in the Valley and met with little protest. Then the United States Government, as it extended its power across the Mississippi River into the Louisiana Purchase, began to take steps to prevent the traffic. Laws were passed by the general government and by the local governments to prevent the introduction of liquor into the Indian country. That these laws looked toward the protection and welfare of the Indian as well as the protection of the whites against the results of the red man's intoxication is shown by the fact that they often carried clauses providing that money received or goods purchased of the Indians in exchange for liquor must be returned to them. But the traders on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, carrying on their operations individually or on behalf of the various fur companies, were frequent violators of the law.

Whiskey running was hard to prevent but the Indian agents worked persistently. Frequent were the complaints turned in to the Indian Office with regard to Jean Joseph Rolette of Prairie du Chien, one of the most prominent of the traders on the Upper Mississippi. King Rolette he was called by the whites, while the Indians spoke of him as Zica or the Pheasant because of the speed with which he travelled. He was a French Canadian and his operations were paralleled by many others of his compatriots who enlivened the history of the Mississippi

River during the first third of the nineteenth century. He married the daughter of Antoine Dubois, a friend of Julien Dubuque, by whom it is reported the young girl was raised after her father had been killed by the Indians.

On the west side of the Mississippi, not far from Prairie du Chien, were the mines of Julien Dubuque, first permanent settler of the Iowa country. It is difficult to say how much of Dubuque's influence with the Sauk and Foxes was due to the insinuating services of the whiskey barrel. The evidence at hand, however, indicates that Dubuque held his unusual power over the Indians by reason of faculties which were uncommon even among the versatile French Canadians, rather than by use of the readily available expedient of intoxicating liquors. His companions were not able to hold favor with the red men and were driven out of the region upon Dubuque's death, nor could his rivals succeed to his post of profit.

Ten years later, in 1820, Henry Schoolcraft travelling through the Upper Mississippi Valley found great difficulty in getting permission to visit the mines, but at last succeeded by directing one of his voyageurs "to bring in a present of whiskey and tobacco". And in 1823 Beltrami, the Italian, coming up the river in the first steamboat to ascend to St. Paul, wrote:

The Indians still keep exclusive possession of these mines,

and with such jealousy, that I was obliged to have recourse to the all-powerful whiskey to obtain permission to see them.

Over on the Missouri a similar traffic was going on. The American Fur Company began the operation of a distillery at Fort Union but the Indian agent reported the fact to the authorities and the company was compelled to cease its activities. The most famous of the Missouri River traders was the Spaniard, Manuel Lisa, of the Missouri Fur Company. He was a man of great energy and wide interests and had many enemies. In 1817 he found it necessary to defend himself against the charge of selling whiskey to the Indians. In a letter written to William Clark, Governor of the Territory of Missouri, he said :

If this charge is true it is capable of being proved. There are in this town, at present, many persons who have been in my employment, characters of the first respectability; also five nations with whom I have traded; among them can be found witnesses to attest the fact, if it be true. On the contrary, I appeal to the whole of them, and pronounce it a vile falsehood. At the same time, it is an act of hospitality indispensable in his intercourse with the Indians, for the trader to treat his hunters with small presents of liquor. They look for it, and are dissatisfied if they do not receive it. The permanent trader makes such presents with discretion. I have made them, and urged the necessity of them to your Excellency.

In May, 1838, Father De Smet was sent out to

establish a mission among the Potawatomi Indians. His post was near the site of the present city of Council Bluffs. In his diary are frequent comments upon the evils of the liquor traffic among the Indians. Once he wrote as follows:

Arrival of the steamer *Wilmington* with provisions. A war of extermination appears preparing around the poor Potawatomes. Fifty large cannons have been landed, ready charged with the most murderous grape shot, each containing thirty gallons of whiskey, brandy, rum or alcohol. The boat was not yet out of sight when the skirmishes commenced. After the fourth, fifth and sixth discharges, the confusion became great and appalling. In all directions, men, women and children were seen tottering and falling; the war-whoop, the merry Indians' songs, cries, savage roarings, formed a chorus. Quarrel succeeded quarrel. Blows followed blows. The club, the tomahawk, spears, butcher knives, brandished together in the air. Strange! Astonishing! only one man, in this dreadful affray, was drowned in the Missouri, another severely stabbed, and several noses lost. . . . A squaw offered her little boy four years old, to the crew of the boat for a few bottles of whiskey. I know from good authority, that upwards of eighty barrels of whiskey are on the line ready to be brought in at the payment.

May 31. Drinking all day. Drunkards by the dozen. Indians are selling horses, blankets, guns, their all, to have a lick at the cannon. Four dollars a bottle! Plenty at that price!! Detestable traffic.

De Smet's service at this post was short, but in

1842 Fort Croghan was established with Captain Burgwin in charge and this proved a new obstacle in the way of liquor selling by the traders, for the captain had orders to inspect boats going up the river and seize the liquor. Chittenden, however, tells of one case in which a cargo of liquor was smuggled up stream to the Indian country in spite of the inspection of Captain Burgwin.

The ship *Omega*, an American Fur Company boat commanded by Captain Sire and bound for the Upper Missouri in 1843, was halted opposite Fort Croghan by rifle shots across the bow and the message that it must wait inspection by Captain Burgwin. It so happened that the naturalist John James Audubon and his party were passengers upon the boat and they had a government permit to carry a limited amount of liquor. This was exempt, but not so the large quantities of liquor which the boat carried in its hold. Audubon, however, was disposed to help out his companion, the boat captain, in eluding the seizure. He sent word to Captain Burgwin that he would like to visit his post, and so flattered and pleased the army officer by the honor of his visit that he delayed the tour of inspection for two hours. Meanwhile the boat crew had not been idle. The hold was divided into two narrow compartments with a partition between. For the moving of goods there was a sort of tramway with little cars which ran the length of one compartment, rounded a curve in the bow of the boat and returned on the other side

of the partition. The crew loaded the barrels of liquor on these cars and ran them into a dark corner of the hold.

Upon the arrival of the inspector, he was regaled with the choice wines of the Audubon supply until he was in such a mellow mood that he was willing to forego the inspection. But Captain Sire insisted upon it, only urging that he be as rigorous with all other traders. So the inspection began in the corner of the dark hold away from the liquor-laden cars; and if the captain had been suspicious and watchful as he finished one compartment and passed through an opening in the partition to the other side he might have seen, smoothly rounding the curve at the far end of the boat, a string of cars bound for the localities he had just inspected. The liquor was safe and Chittenden ends his story with this remark: "But woe to the luckless craft of some rival trader which should happen along with no Audubon in the cabin and no tramway in the hold."

In the period of the Territory of Iowa the Governor was ex-officio Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Robert Lucas and John Chambers were both men of strong convictions on the matter of selling liquor to the Indians. Lucas vigorously attacked the trade in his first message to the legislature and as a result a law was passed imposing a fine of not more than one hundred or less than twenty-five dollars for each offence. This penalty, however, was so light in comparison to the profits to be made that



traders incurred the risk without hesitation and the traffic flourished.

Chambers also attacked the trade in his first message. Depicting the degradation and destruction of the tribes from this practice, he said:

Humanity shudders and religion weeps over the cruel and unrelenting destruction of a people so interesting, by means so dastardly and brutal, that the use of the rifle and the sword, even in time of profound peace with them, would be comparatively merciful.

He urged the amendment of the existing law to make efficient its enforcement. But no action was taken. A year later he advised the addition of a term of imprisonment to the pecuniary penalty; but the legislature would go no further than to raise the amount of fine to a minimum of \$100 and a maximum of \$500. This was a move in the right direction but it did not greatly check the operations of the whiskey runners.

The last payment of annuities to the Sac and Fox Indians before their migration west of the Missouri took place at Fort Des Moines in 1845. An account of this distribution by a witness shows that liquor was much in evidence—that it was given to the Indians by soldiers under the eyes of the officers, that Captain Allen presented the chief Pow-e-shiek with a bottle of liquor with his compliments, and that the aftermath of the occasion was a general debauch.

Within a year these tribes had moved out of Iowa,



and the other tribes remained little longer. It seemed, indeed, that the only way in which Iowa was able to solve the problem of the sale of liquor to the Indians, was to send the Indians beyond its jurisdiction.

JOHN C. PARISH

## The Handcart Expeditions

During the summer of 1856 there arrived at Iowa City, then the western terminus of the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad, several thousand Mormon converts from England, Scotland, and other European countries. Many of these people were wards of the Perpetual Emigration Fund Company which had been organized to assist converts who could not pay for their outfits and transportation, the immigrants signing contracts to work for the church until the full amount was refunded.

At this time the wave of immigration bound for Utah had become so great that the officers of the church decided it was impossible to provide wagons and oxen to transport all the needy immigrants from Iowa City to Salt Lake City, although the total cost of bringing one of these poor converts from Europe to Utah was only about sixty dollars. To meet this situation, Brigham Young and his advisers had, as early as the fall of 1855, evolved the plan of sending these hundreds of proselytes across the continent on foot. "The Lord, through his prophet, says of the poor, 'Let them come on foot, with hand-carts or wheelbarrows; let them gird up their loins, and walk through, and nothing shall hinder them.' "

To show how feasible the plan was, the head of the church wrote to F. D. Richards in charge of the converts in Liverpool: "Fifteen miles a day will bring them through in 70 days, and, after they get accus-

tomed to it, they will travel 20, 25, or even 30 with all ease, and no danger of giving out, but will continue to get stronger and stronger; the little ones and sick, if there are any, can be carried on the carts, but there will be none sick in a little time after they get started."

Lured by this rosy picture of a trip of which their limited experience gave them no real comprehension, some thirteen hundred converts arrived at Iowa City during the summer of 1856 pledged to undertake the journey on foot. Here the tired and bewildered immigrants found that their outfits were not ready: even the handcarts were yet to be made. While waiting for their equipment, the newcomers were camped on the prairie some two miles from Iowa City, often without tents or any shelter from the elements.

Finally, however, after two or three weeks delay one detachment after another got under way for the first stage of the overland journey — the trip from Iowa City to the Missouri River — following at first the old road to Fort Des Moines.

The first company left Iowa City on June 9, 1856, with two hundred and twenty-six people; the second, with about the same number, started two days later; and a third and smaller company, composed largely of Welsh converts, began their march on June 23rd. Since these three companies were small and started fairly early in the summer, they arrived safely at Salt Lake City before the cold weather began. The

first detachment, which reached its destination on the twenty-sixth of September, was met by a delegation of church officers, a large number of citizens, an escort of cavalry, and the bands of the Nauvoo legion. The "divine plan" of transporting converts was considered a great success.

The two later companies were not so fortunate. The fourth detachment, commanded by James G. Willie, was detained at Iowa City for three weeks while the carts were being made for them and did not leave until the middle of July, while the fifth and last company for this year, with Edward Martin as its leader, began its long march on July 28th.

Their personal equipment was necessarily limited: seventeen pounds of baggage was allowed each person and this must include some food and the bedding and clothing for the long march. To carry this baggage there was provided for every five persons a cart — two wooden wheels, with thin iron tires, connected by a wooden axle upon which rested the body or box in which the baggage was to be carried. Attached to one end were projecting shafts about five feet long with a cross piece at the end by means of which the rickety vehicle was pulled along.

In addition to the carts a wagon drawn by three yoke of oxen was provided for each hundred persons and on this were the extra provisions and the five tents allotted to this group. A few of the very old or crippled members of the company were carried in these wagons but, for the most part, the company was on foot — men, women, and children. More-

over, the handcarts, weighing when loaded about one hundred pounds, had to be pulled over the rough roads or unbroken prairie.

To most people of to-day — even to the young and strong, unencumbered by supplies — the prospect of walking from Iowa City to Council Bluffs in July or August would be viewed with dismay, but these people were of all ages and conditions of physical strength, and there were more women than men. Many carts were pulled by women, although the men in the party were required to assist others if they were not needed by their own families.

A description of the fourth division during the march through Iowa, written by one of those who participated in the exodus, gives a vivid picture of the company as it trailed across Iowa:

As we travelled along, we presented a singular, and some times an affecting appearance. The young and strong went along gaily with their carts, but the old people and little children were to be seen straggling a long distance in the rear. Sometimes, when the little folks had walked as far as they could, their fathers would take them on their carts, and thus increase the load that was already becoming too heavy as the day advanced. . . . The most affecting scene, however, was to see a mother carrying her child at the breast, mile after mile, until nearly exhausted. The heat was intense, and the dust suffocating, which rendered our daily journeys toilsome in the extreme.

The daily rations consisted of ten ounces of flour — then selling for three cents a pound — for each adult and half as much for each child. As luxuries

they were occasionally served a little rice, sugar, coffee, and bacon. "Any hearty man", said the annalist, "could eat his daily allowance for breakfast. In fact, some of our men did this, and then worked all day without dinner, and went to bed supperless or begged food at the farmhouses as we travelled along."

The people of Iowa gave food to the hungry wayfarers and urged them not to attempt the long trip overland, especially so late in the summer. The converts, however, were new to the difficulties of prairie travel; they were inspired by the hope of seeing the new Zion, and thoroughly under the influence of their leaders who constantly warned them against the Gentiles. Only a very few of the company withdrew.

Almost four weeks elapsed before the weary immigrants reached the Missouri River—the starting point of the great adventure. Here a council was held to discuss the advisability of attempting the journey so late in the year, but all the leaders except one—Levi Savage—urged that the train continue and the converts obediently voted to proceed. Savage, who had made the trip to and from Salt Lake, was rebuked for want of faith but promised to accompany the expedition and share the hardships.

A week of hurried preparations, and the detachment left Florence, Nebraska, on August 18, 1856, westward bound. If the trip through Iowa had been full of hardships that now before the immigrants

was appalling. In Iowa food was plentiful and charity frequently supplemented the regular rations. Any who were unable to continue the march might find a haven in some settlement where sympathy counteracted religious prejudice. But on the plains there was no opportunity to secure clothing or bedding as the nights grew chill, no settlers' shanties where food might be secured if their own supply gave out. There was food, it is true, in the herds of buffalo, but these European working men were totally unfitted to secure it. Indeed, with their equipment, it is doubtful whether experienced plainsmen could have lived off the country.

The carts were, consequently, more heavily laden than before, but even so, much in the way of bedding and warm clothing, the need of which was not evident in August, had to be discarded for lack of room. A ninety-eight pound sack of flour was added to each cart, nearly doubling the original burden. The flour ration, however, was increased to a pound a day, fresh meat was issued occasionally, and each hundred had three or four milch cows.

Refreshed by the rest at Florence, trusting implicitly in their leaders, and unaware of the perils in front of them the immigrants started out gaily, gathering each evening around the camp fires for worship, exhortation, and singing. One of the favorite songs was specially written for the handcart travellers and was sung to the tune *A Little More Cider*. The words were as follows:



Oh, our faith goes with the hand-carts,  
And they have our hearts' best love;  
'Tis a novel mode of travelling,  
*Devised by the Gods above.*

CHORUS:

Hurrah for the Camp of Israel!  
Hurrah for the hand-cart scheme!  
Hurrah! hurrah! 'tis better far  
Than the wagon and ox-team.

*And Brigham's their executive,*  
He told us the design;  
And the Saints are proudly marching on,  
Along the hand-cart line.

Who cares to go with the wagons?  
Not we who are free and strong;  
Our faith and arms, with right good will,  
Shall pull our carts along.

It was not long, however, before trouble developed. The carts were hastily and poorly made and on the dry prairie the axles were soon badly worn from the constant grinding of the dry sand. No axle grease had been provided and some of the company were compelled to use their cherished allowance of bacon to grease the wheels. Others used their soap, of which they had very little, and attempts were made to protect the axles by wrapping them in leather or tin. As the weight of the flour

dwindled, however, the carts ran easier and with grim determination the company pressed forward.

To those who have made the trip over this route by rail, watching the corn and wheat fields of Nebraska slip smoothly past the windows of the Pullman car or idly counting the prairie dogs which bob up and stand at attention as the train flashes through the barren hills of Wyoming, the journey is one of a few hours and no hardship. Even the tourist in the dust-covered automobile can have no real appreciation of the task of these four hundred and twenty men, women, and children as they walked wearily along day after day pulling the creaking, complaining carts or carrying little children in their arms.

To add to their difficulties their cattle were stampered by the buffalo near Wood River and thirty of the oxen were lost. The one yoke remaining for each wagon was unable to pull the loads of some 3000 pounds over the rough roads and the beef cattle, cows, and young stock were put under the yoke. Even then another sack of flour had to be added to each cart to lighten the weight of the wagons.

It was in this time of perplexity that a group of Mormon apostles and leaders—including F. D. Richards, who had acted as Young's agent in England, and Joseph A. Young, a son of the prophet—passed the weary converts, camping with them one night. At their request for fresh meat the fattest calf was killed, though the immigrants themselves

were short of food. In their carriages drawn by four horses or mules the leaders drove rapidly ahead of the crawling caravan, pausing only long enough to point out the best ford for the crossing of the North Platte. "They stood and watched us wade the river—here almost a mile in width, and in places from two to three feet deep," wrote one of the company. "Our women and girls waded, pulling their carts after them."

The officials promised to leave supplies for the detachment at Fort Laramie but when the tattered and footsore immigrants reached there in September none had arrived. The supply of flour on hand, it was estimated, would not last until they reached their destination and unless relief reached them from Salt Lake there was no possibility of obtaining any more. It was decided to reduce the ration from a pound per day to twelve ounces for working men, nine ounces for women and old men, and from four to eight ounces for children, and to make every effort to travel faster.

As the caravan trailed up the Sweetwater River toward South Pass the nights became colder and the mountains were covered with snow. Fording the river chilled the exhausted travellers and their supply of clothing and bedding was inadequate to protect them from the cold. Exhaustion, cold, and lack of food soon showed results. The old and weak began to die: at first only an occasional grave was needed, but soon one or two persons were buried at

each camping place. Dysentery was added to their enemies and the young and strong also began to die. There were no medicines and no opportunity for caring for the sick. Men frequently pulled the handcart, on which were the supplies for their families and perhaps the children themselves, until the day preceding their death. Those wholly unable to walk were put in the wagons and when there was no room there, were hauled on the handcarts, jolting slowly over the rocks and sand of the trail or tipping this way and that as they were pulled across the creeks and ravines.

It was in this desperate situation that the caravan was met by Joseph A. Young, who had watched the company ford the North Platte. Apprehensive of the fate of the immigrants he had no sooner reached Salt Lake City than he reported their situation to his father and was immediately ordered to meet the two detachments with supplies. Pushing on ahead of the wagons with one companion he met the fourth company in the midst of its first heavy snow storm. After announcing the coming supply train he went on eastward to meet the fifth group, whose situation was even more precarious.

With renewed hope the converts pushed desperately ahead, doubling teams when the worn out cattle were unable to pull even the diminished loads. Next morning they woke to find the snow a foot deep, their hungry cattle had strayed away, some of the exhausted animals had perished, and worse than all,

five of the company had died during the night. There was no flour and only a little hard bread which had been secured at Fort Laramie. To move through the snow in their starving and exhausted condition was impossible and it was determined to send two men — Captain Willie and a companion — ahead to hurry the supply train, and to await their coming in camp. Two of the worn-out oxen were killed for food and this meat, a few pounds of sugar and dried apples, a part of a sack of rice, and some twenty or twenty-five pounds of biscuits was all the food for the company until help arrived.

For three days they remained there — hungry, cold, many of them ill, the cattle dying of starvation. On the evening of the third day came the wagons which had halted on account of the snow storm, the teamsters not realizing that the handcart immigrants were actually starving. Wild scenes of rejoicing met the relief party and new hope of reaching Zion inspired the immigrants.

A part of the supply train continued eastward to meet Martin's party and the others took charge of the party in camp and began the slow return to Salt Lake. Those too weak to walk were permitted to ride in the wagons but even here they suffered intolerably from the cold. Many froze their feet and had to be carried from place to place. Food and renewed hope failed to save some of the sufferers. At the camp on Willow Creek fifteen persons were buried, their bodies stiffly frozen.

Perhaps in the history of the United States there are few pictures more pathetic than this company of Mormon converts as they straggled along through the snow, afraid to sit down to rest lest they perish with the cold, the oxen as dejected as the people. One elderly man — a farm laborer from Gloucestershire — unable to pull his cart, trudged along for a while with his little son, carrying in his stiff hands his cherished gun. At last he could go no farther and lay down in the snow, wrapped in an old quilt given him by a kindly companion. An ox team returning for the stragglers rescued him late at night, but he died before morning. Scenes like these were not uncommon. Sometimes three or four of the human teams combined to pull the carts but this was slow work and necessitated much additional walking.

After crossing South Pass, however, the suffering gradually diminished: the weather became warmer and they were met by wagons loaded with food sent out by the Mormon people. On the ninth of November, some four months after their start from Iowa City, the fourth detachment reached Salt Lake City, the Mecca of their pilgrimage of three thousand miles by steamer, one thousand miles by rail, and fifteen hundred miles on foot.

Sixty-seven of this company, however, had fallen by the way. The fifth detachment lost even more heavily: about one-fourth of the party perished during the journey. The tragedy of these two companies led to the exchange of recriminations and

charges between the Mormon leaders, and though at least three other companies were sent across the plains in 1859 and 1860, none were organized after the latter date. The ox team and the railroad took the place of the "divine plan".

RUTH A. GALLAHER



## The Passing of a Slave

The presence of an aged negro at the State encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic in Iowa City recently brought to mind another colored soldier who wore the blue during the trying days of the Civil War, and spent his declining years at Bedford, Iowa.

Born in slavery in Savannah, Missouri, and owned by a man named Jack Davis this negro had none of the advantages of education afforded his race to-day, yet he so improved his mind through an unquenchable thirst for information that he acquired a wealth of knowledge and wisdom. He died a few years ago, in 1915 to be exact, and the white man's church in which was read the funeral service was filled to the doors by the many townsmen who paid tribute to his memory.

During the war a detachment of Confederate troops came to the Davis place to take the slaves away to a safer location, and young Jack Howe was sent to the barn to care for a horse belonging to an officer. With some other negroes he managed to escape and to cross the Iowa line. He then enlisted in the Union army and served faithfully until the close of the war. One of his most cherished memories was the fact that he served in the campaign of Vicksburg under Grant. After receiving an honor-

able discharge he came to Taylor County, Iowa, and for several years engaged in farming. Later he removed to Bedford where he ran a truck garden.

Although he never learned to read, every evening found him seated in an arm chair in front of the town hall listening to the reading of newspapers. Governmental affairs interested him particularly and his memory for details was marvelous. He would listen to the reading of the President's message to Congress with all the interest displayed by a fiction lover in the latest popular novel. When the Payne-Aldrich tariff bill was in process of formation he followed painstakingly the framing of each schedule and foretold with considerable accuracy the unpopular reception it would create.

War news, too, held his attention. During the Spanish-American imbroglio of 1898 he was the first to buy a paper when the newsdealer put the morning dailies on the counter and then he would seek some other old soldier to read it to him. Part of this interest was due, doubtless, to the fact that he had a son in the famous colored regiment that supported Roosevelt and his Rough Riders at San Juan and El Caney. Later this son went with his regiment to the Philippines and there he died after a lingering illness.

During the Russo-Japanese struggle of 1904-1905 Jack Howe stubbornly defended the cause of Russia, arguing that Russia was the friend of the Union in the dark days of 1861-1865 and hence deserved the

sympathy of the United States in her difficulty. He lived to see the beginning of the great World War and, feeble though he was, his hunger for information was unabated and he importuned his friends daily to read or tell him the progress of the struggle.

Jack was a regular attendant at the sessions of the district court and to hear him mimic the leading lawyers of the county seat was a rare treat. Half in fun and half in earnest opposing counsel in a jury trial would consult him as to the verdict when the case had gone to the jury, and the remarkable thing about his answers was the number of times he accurately predicted the outcome.

In politics he was one of the best-known characters in southwestern Iowa. Republicanism was almost a religion with him. He admitted that there were some good Democrats but how a negro could vote the Democratic ticket was beyond his comprehension. Even in local affairs, in city and school elections, he supported Republicans only. At every Republican rally or meeting he occupied a front seat and when the speaker made some telling point or soundly berated the Democratic party Jack would raise his voice in his own version of the rebel yell to the great amusement of the audience and to the consternation of a speaker who had not been warned of the old negro's enthusiasm. All the Republican candidates who campaigned in the eighth Congressional district knew him personally and laughed heartily over his enthusiasm during their speeches.

“Uncle Pete” Hepburn, Judge H. M. Towner, Senator A. B. Cummins and former Governor Leslie M. Shaw were his favorite political orators and they were sure of a rousing reception on Jack’s part every time they spoke at Bedford.

Jack Howe, ex-slave and ex-soldier, was a credit to his race, and his death reminds us of the passing of the American slave. He was past ninety when he died, and the youngest negro born in slavery has already reached the twilight of his life. A few years more and the rapidly thinning ranks of the negroes who served in bondage will be depleted. Then will have gone from American history many who like Jack Howe were courteous, genteel and faithful — a distinct and worthy type of the colored race.

BRUCE E. MAHAN

## Comment by the Editor

### OUTFITTING FOR THE WEST

Probably it comes as a surprise to most of us to find that Iowa City was an outfitting post for a series of expeditions as considerable as those described by Miss Gallaher in the story of the Handcart Expeditions. And yet it is a natural enough incident in the history of that time. Iowa City was the western end of the railroad, which reached the town on January first, 1856, and it was in the following summer that the hundreds of European proselytes to the Mormon faith gathered there in a camp two miles from town and waited for the busy citizens to make them handcarts and otherwise profit by their preparations for the long overland trail.

Other towns had already become outfitting places. Before the days of the railroad Burlington and Dubuque, lying beside the great waterway, had served travelers who left the river to go into the interior wilderness. Mormons crossing in the great trek of 1846-1847 made their own camps as they went, but established on the site of Council Bluffs the outfitting town of Kanessville which served Mormons and Gentile for long years before it changed its name to Council Bluffs.

The Fifty-niners with their canvas covered wag-

ons flaunting the slogan of "Pike's Peak or Bust" traveled across Iowa by the thousands and sampled the supplies and the good cheer of the town on the Missouri before they crossed on the ferry and began the trail across the plains.

It was through Iowa that the railroads from the East first penetrated on their way to the far West, and the railhead was always more or less of a jumping off place. Sioux City as well as Council Bluffs soon succeeded to this advantage. In the seventies when the gold strike in the Black Hills stirred the adventurers of the country, Sioux City became the outfitting post for many expeditions.

But the towns of Iowa served these purposes only as temporary functions and with the westward flight of the frontier they settled down to the more prosaic and more permanent task of acting as community centers for an agricultural State.

J. C. P.

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AUGUST 1922

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT IOWA CITY BY  
**THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA**



## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

The PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

*Superintendent*

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## THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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PRICE—10c per copy: \$1 per year: free to members of Society

ADDRESS—The State Historical Society Iowa City Iowa

# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN C. PARISH

ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

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VOL. III

ISSUED IN AUGUST 1922

No. 8

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## Robert Lucas

There are at least three known portraits of Iowa's first Governor, Robert Lucas. One is a water color painting of a young man in uniform with a high crowned hat decorated with a military cockade. It represents, no doubt, the period of Lucas's life when he was a somewhat swashbuckling young officer in the Ohio militia. The view is a profile and shows a rather long nose and prominent brows; but the mouth — too well-shaped for reality — and the large dark eye, make one suspect that the artist did not get them from life but culled them from some drawing manual which provided sample illustrations of human features for the benefit of young draughtsmen. Naturally there is little of character reflected in this picture.

But in the second portrait the subject has laid aside his military hat and epauletted coat, arrayed himself in the black stock and white linen and severe coat of civilian life and turned his face to the front.

It is a strong face with a mien somewhat stern and imperious. The portrait is that of a man in middle life and probably shows him as he looked in his years as a legislator and Governor of Ohio.

His hair is combed up and back like a modern pompadour, leaving a high expanse of forehead. His eyes are set wide apart under level, strongly marked eyebrows. His nose is long and slightly aquiline, his mouth straight and his chin square. The general shape and set of his head give the impression of a spare-framed wiry man of erect and unrelaxing carriage.

The third picture is that of an old man. In his seventy-second year, Lucas wrote of having a daguerreotype taken and remarked: "It is thought to be a good likeness." No doubt it is from this primitive photograph that George Yewell painted the oil portrait which shows Robert Lucas as Iowans must have known him. The picture is much like the second. It faces unequivocally to the front, a black stock wraps itself about the white collar whose wide-spread points rise up on each side of his chin. His hair is still combed up and back away from his forehead, but it has turned white with the years.

In his face one can read the story of his tempestuous governorship in the new Territory west of the Mississippi. Every feature has sharpened and intensified its characteristics. His nose is thinner than ever and his nostrils curve up like those of a restive horse. His high wide cheek bones seem more pro-

nounced and the cheeks below them thinner. But in the eyes and the mouth particularly the story has written itself. The mouth has tightened into a thin line of habitual determination as if the continual practice of pressing his lips together had set them there in an unrelaxing union. And the eyes. Deep-set beneath the straight ledge of white eyebrows, they burn with an intensity that was merely hinted at in his earlier portrait. There is a sternness in them that must have seemed almost malignant to his enemies.

Uncompromising he was, beyond the venture of a doubt; and as he slipped over into his seventies the mellowing years seemed to have failed to soften the expression which had settled upon his face in the long years of a stormy career.

Now that the reader has looked upon these portraits it may be well to turn back to the story of the life of this vehement figure if only to find the three portraits matched by periods of his existence. Lucas was by heritage a Quaker, but his father had been a Revolutionary soldier, and the paths of peace he himself was seldom content to tread. He was an enthusiastic militia man and rose to the grade of major general in the Ohio organization.

His life as a young man in pioneer Ohio was full of turbulence; and it was probably mixed with some lawlessness. In 1810 a suit was brought against him and the sheriff of Scioto County attempted to take him into custody. Lucas, however, resisted ar-

rest. He was a formidable and determined man, a prominent officer of the militia, and he had many friends in the community. The sheriff decided to resign his office rather than persist in his dangerous duties. Thereupon the coroner, upon whom the task then devolved, also resigned. Lucas then swore vengeance upon the clerk who issued the writ and he too resigned.

But men were soon found who would make the arrest, and a small posse proceeded to Brown's tavern where Lucas was then living at Portsmouth, Ohio, and started with him to the jail. As the procession got under way, John Brown, tavern-keeper and father-in-law of Lucas, fiery in disposition but small in stature, tried to effect a rescue. One of the larger men of the posse, however, rudely threw him into a clump of jimson weed and the son-in-law remained in the hands of the law.

Lucas, from the secure fastnesses of the jail, cast about for some means of escape, and the militia occurred to him. So he wrote letters to various officers asking them to come to the rescue of their unfortunate commander. Eighteen years later, when he was running for State senator, an opposing newspaper printed one of these letters written to a militia captain, asking that he and his men gather at Mr. Brown's and unite in supporting the constitution of the State by coming to the defense of their constitutional officer whom the revolutionist party had by violence forced into prison. On the fold of

the letter was a list of the five men of the posse and opposite the names this legend: "The dam raskels that mobbed me". But though in that year Lucas had succeeded to the duties of a brigadier general, there is no evidence that the militia effected a jail delivery.

As early as 1803 he was interested in military affairs, being engaged in that year upon one occasion in recruiting volunteers for the Ohio militia. When the United States ship Chesapeake was fired upon by a British commander in 1807, Lucas was called upon to furnish a company from his regiment to hold itself in readiness for immediate active service, an invasion of Canada being in contemplation. The company was formed by volunteers from the regiment and they chose Lucas to act as their captain. The occasion for action, however, did not materialize. In the War of 1812 there was real need of military duty, and Lucas served under General Hull at Detroit. He must have continued his interest in military affairs after the war was over for in February, 1816, he was elected major general of the 2d division of the Ohio militia.

But the business of politics now engrossed him. He had been sent to the lower house of the Ohio legislature in 1808, and after the War of 1812 he was elected to the State senate. From 1814 to 1832, with the exception of only four scattering years he served in the legislature of the State of Ohio. He was a Democrat, an ardent supporter of Andrew



Jackson. In fact he looked like Jackson, he had come up through somewhat similar experiences, and he had many characteristics that matched those of Old Hickory.

In May, 1832, at Baltimore, Lucas had the honor of presiding over the first national convention ever held by the Democratic Party and then he came home to a campaign that landed him in the Governor's chair at Columbus. In 1830 he had been an unsuccessful candidate for the governorship of Ohio, but in 1832 he was elected by a large majority, and two years later he was chosen to fill a second term.

He was now in the prime of life. He had come from Virginia to Ohio a generation before when it was not yet a State. He had surveyed land in the new country, had helped organize its militia, and had served for many years as legislator. Too early for railroads, he had pushed persistently for a widespread system of canals. He had seen Ohio grow from a wilderness with only here and there a solitary settlement to a State with more than a million inhabitants and hundreds of thriving towns.

Meanwhile he had learned to control the impetuosity of his youth and turn his energy into constructive channels. He still loved and hated with intensity, and he always would. But now, his enemies instead of being "the dam raskels that mobbed him" became invested with terms more polite if not less positive. Positiveness was fundamental in the psy-



chology of Lucas. He made up his mind definitely and held to his opinions unswervingly. Yet it must be conceded that his decisions were usually backed by a sound judgment and common sense.

The most enlivening episode in the period of his governorship was the Ohio-Michigan boundary dispute. A strip of land between Ohio and the Territory of Michigan was claimed by both, and at one time Governor Lucas, with 600 Ohio militiamen, glared across the line from Perrysburg at Stevens T. Mason, the "Boy Governor" of Michigan, who had gathered about a thousand troops behind him at Toledo. Both Governors were determined and the citizens of State and Territory were inflamed, but Lucas refused to make it a struggle between State and Territory, claiming that it was a question between Ohio and the United States; and though overpatriotic Buckeyes assured him they would "follow him through blood to their eyes", he averted bloodshed and the question was settled by granting the disputed tract to Ohio and admitting Michigan to the Union with a peace-offering in the shape of an addition of land beyond Lake Michigan.

When he laid down the duties of Governor he was quite desirous of becoming United States Senator. It was the third time he had been considered for this post, and now he felt that he was the logical man for the position. But he was disappointed. A much younger man was chosen. The fruits of his long career of public service were to be used in an-

other and far different field, for his friends at Washington secured his appointment as Governor of the newly created Territory of Iowa, out on the frontier of the nation's growth.

Lucas was of a race of pioneers. Born in western Virginia a few weeks before the surrender of Yorktown, he had come to Ohio just as he reached maturity and there he grew up with the country for a third of a century. Now, as he journeyed down the Ohio River by steamboat to his new post in 1838, he found himself at the age of 57 coming again into a land of beginnings, a region of scattered settlements and primitive political life. The new Territory could well profit by the political experience of Robert Lucas. And his well formulated ideas on such questions as education, gambling and intemperance, and public improvements were worth their consideration. But he had a stormy time for three years.

His first conflict was with William B. Conway, the Secretary of the Territory. Conway was a very young and very ambitious man. He arrived in Iowa before Lucas, and taking prompt advantage of the provision of the Organic Act which made the Secretary a sort of vice-Governor, he began forthwith to occupy himself with the duties of the major office. When Lucas arrived it was difficult for the young man to step down. Relations between the two men became increasingly difficult. Conway next quarreled with the legislative assembly but soon patched up his differences with the law-makers and made

common cause with them in an altercation which they had developed with Governor Lucas over Territorial expenditures and the veto power.

The Governor, in accordance with well-fixed principles of his political faith, used the power of veto which the Organic Act gave him. The legislators rebelled even so far as to ask the President of the United States to remove him from office. They were unsuccessful but the veto power was changed to a limited form.

He attacked with vehemence the prevalent frontier vices of gambling and intemperance, and refused to appoint any man guilty of these habits to an office. This made him enemies who succeeded in getting his appointive power reduced. He arraigned the habit of carrying concealed weapons, and referred to the recent killing of a member elect of the legislature by a prominent Burlington attorney, and thus made another bitter foe. He pointed out the extravagance of the legislative expenditures and the looseness of Secretary Conway's accounts and still more men ranged themselves against him. But the Governor, unrelenting and uncompromising, pursued his way unmoved. Legislatures changed, Secretary Conway died, and public affairs took on a semblance of stability.

Another event occurred in which Lucas found himself more at harmony with his fellow citizens. A dispute arose as to the boundary between the Territory of Iowa and the State of Missouri. Lucas

surely was not without experience in this sort of controversy. But now he was the champion of the Territory rather than the State. He was just as positive. And he still maintained that the Territory could not oppose the State. Only as a representative of the United States government could he participate in any way. But in this capacity he had duties to uphold, and he supported the contention of the Territory with vigor.

Again occurred the spectacle of two conglomerate bodies of troops facing each other across a disputed tract of land, and again they disbanded without a clash, leaving the question to be decided as Lucas contended it should be — by the United States government. Theodore S. Parvin recorded in his diary: "The Border war turned to be a Humbug — troops returned — a drinking frolic followed."

With the change of presidential administration in 1841 Lucas was removed to make way for a Whig. He spent the remainder of his life for the most part in Iowa, serving as a prominent member of the Constitutional Convention of 1844, participating intermittently in public affairs, and dying at last in 1853 at his home on the edge of Iowa City.

As one turns back to the last portrait of Robert Lucas, the grim old face carries its own interpretation. The wide, high forehead bears out the impression of a mind that could reason clearly and logically, and look upon public matters with some foresight. The eyes, deep set and dominating, show an

intensity of spirit, and the unsmiling mouth bespeaks an inflexible determination. But in the eyes there is a suggestion of bitterness, and nowhere in the dramatic old face is there any indication of a quality that would have enriched his life and increased his influence among his fellow men—a sense of humor.

JOHN C. PARISH

## Iowa in the Days of Lucas

The State of Iowa to-day covers an area of about 55,000 square miles. In 1838 when Robert Lucas came out to Burlington as Governor he found the Territory of Iowa spread over a tract of land approximately three times that size. It included besides the present Iowa, all of modern Minnesota lying west of the Mississippi River, and all of what is now North and South Dakota east of the Missouri. On the north the Canadian line was the boundary and on the northwest in the faraway land of the Sioux the line followed the White Earth River southward from Canada until it joined the Missouri.

But if the area was large the population was exceedingly small. In 1838 there were 22,859 persons in the Territory and this is less than one per cent of the present population of the State. Furthermore over half of these had come in within two years.

These people lived almost entirely in the Black Hawk Purchase which extended back from the river not more than fifty miles. The chief centers of population were a half dozen or more towns on the west bank of the Mississippi; but in 1838 the counties which ranked second and third in point of numbers were two interior counties — Van Buren and Henry.

Iowa City in that year was not yet thought of; Des Moines was merely the name of a river and a county;

and the western part of the Territory was an unpeopled wilderness save for bands of Indians. It is true that near Council Bluffs Father De Smet had a mission post; on the Red River of the North in the present Minnesota was the group of Selkirk colonists; and west of the Mississippi near Fort Snelling were a few white squatters. But it is doubtful if Lucas or any other officer of the Territory realized their existence.

Before Lucas went out of office in 1841, the population had no doubt doubled itself for it had almost done so when the census of 1840 was taken. This survey showed 43,112 persons in the Territory. As might be expected in a pioneer Commonwealth, the men greatly out-numbered the women, the proportion being roughly 4 to 3. Scattered throughout the various counties were 188 colored persons. Most of these were free of course, but the United States census returns list 16 as slaves — all from the county of Dubuque. This same county is credited by the census taker as possessing among its inhabitants a woman over one hundred years old. This must have been the mother of Alexander Butterworth of Dubuque, who was reported to have danced at her son's wedding in 1837, despite her 107 years.

The presence of so large a number of free colored persons and especially of the sixteen slaves is in line with the fact that Iowa in the time of Lucas had been peopled to a considerable extent from the Southern States. Lucas himself was a native of



Virginia and his successor came to Iowa after nearly a half century of life in Kentucky. The first legislative assembly which Lucas faced in 1838 included in its membership twenty, or more than one-half, whose birthplace was south of the Mason and Dixon Line. New Englanders there were in abundance but they did not predominate as has so often been claimed. As the Civil War approached, the southern influx weakened while that from the northeast increased, but in the years of the early Territorial period, the migration from Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas — sometimes with a few years stop-over in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois — was large. Kentucky and Tennessee sent many young men into this new and promising Territory. And the contributions of Missouri to this upstream migration included such men as George Wallace Jones and Augustus Caesar Dodge, the first two United States Senators from Iowa, and Stephen Hempstead, the second Governor of the State.

In the early days they had come to trade in furs and to mine lead but by 1840 they came to farm. Over 10,000 in that year were listed as farmers while all the other occupations together gave employment to less than 3000. They were men of little wealth, but of sturdy ways. They were democratic and independent, accustomed to labor and frontier hardships, but unaccustomed to restraint. They were intelligent but not many of them were highly educated. Only 365 in 1840 practised the learned professions.

The steamboat *Tempest* from Cincinnati brought Lucas to the landing at Burlington. This was the leading town of the Territory, proud of the honor of having been the Territorial capital of Wisconsin and eager to continue its position as the seat of the government. Dubuque was a strong rival, while Davenport, Fort Madison, and Bloomington (later taking the name Muscatine) were smaller but were growing rapidly. In the interior, settlements had sprung up at Salem, the Quaker village, at Mt. Pleasant, Keosauqua, and a dozen other places but they could not hope to rival the river towns. Iowa City was laid out in 1839 and grew with a rapidity due largely to the fact that it had been founded as the seat of government.

Dubuque was still essentially a miner's town, Burlington a lawyer's town, while Iowa City became the dream town of the politicians. And each of the other smaller towns had its own ambitions and characteristics. Some of the ambitions came to naught, as in the case of Ivanhoe which died a natural death, and Rockingham, which, after fighting a valiant contest for supremacy in the county with Davenport four miles away, was worsted and finally engulfed by its rival. But most of the settlements persevered and grew into thriving and permanent towns.

When Lucas arrived the great highway was the river. Steamers shuttled back and forth between Dubuque and Burlington and brought increasing numbers of settlers from the East and South by way

of the Ohio River and St. Louis. But the overland immigrants also were numerous. They came to the river and crossed on ferries at Dubuque or Davenport or Burlington, and then proceeded to roll their wagon wheels inland.

Trails developed into roads; ferry crossings and fords at the small streams caught the moving tide of migration into little knots of settlement. A military road was laid out in 1839 from Dubuque to Iowa City, and in 1841 Burlington boasted four tri-weekly mails, "one to Peoria, Illinois, with splendid Troy post-coaches; one to Dubuque, via Bloomington and Davenport; one to Fort Madison, Montrose, and St. Francisville, Missouri, continuing to St. Louis; one to Macomb, Rushville, and Springfield, Illinois, continuing east; and one is shortly to be established to Iowa City."

The census of 1840 tells us that fifteen men in Iowa were employed in the turning out of newspapers. Weekly sheets were issued in Dubuque, Davenport, and Burlington, the latter town enjoying the luxury and excitement of two rival papers, the *Hawk-Eye and Iowa Patriot* published by James G. Edwards, a Whig, and the *Iowa Territorial Gazette* published by James Clarke, a Democrat who became Governor of the Territory in 1845.

The columns of these newspapers reflect a virile but heterogeneous population. There were good men and horse-thieves in most of the communities. The settlers built churches soon after they had

founded their towns, and schools came not much later. But the tavern was even an earlier institution. Gambling and intemperance were common vices, the carrying of firearms was prevalent, and organized bands such as the "Linn County bogus gang", and the group that brought on the Bellevue War in 1840, did not hesitate now and then to add murder to the crimes of counterfeiting and horse-stealing.

The better element, however, was strongly in the ascendant, the incoming migration held a constantly larger proportion of law-abiding citizens, and the vigorous administration of Robert Lucas did much to establish peace and order in the frontier Territory. It was still the edge of civilization, with wilderness and the Indian close at hand; but the Indian was more often a victim than an aggressor, and the forces that were to conquer the wilderness had crossed the Mississippi and established themselves invincibly on the western side.

JOHN C. PARISH

## Three Early Taverns

Around the big bend of the Mississippi steamed the side-wheel packet, the *Gypsy*, upstream to the mud bank landing of the little settlement of Bloomington, now Muscatine, Iowa. The year was 1839. The passengers on deck bound for the newly created Territory of Iowa saw the brush and timber-covered bluff and ravines and, scattered among the cottonwood and oak trees on the slope of the hill and along the shore, some twenty-five or thirty shanties and log cabins almost hidden by the foliage. A rough and uneven road half concealed by the hazel bushes at its sides stretched along what is now Front Street.

Stumps upon the river front served as seats for the townspeople who, hearing the hoarse throaty whistle of the approaching steamboat, came down to the shore curious to see the new arrivals. The deep toned bell of the *Gypsy* rang out as the boat warped into the landing and the gang plank was thrust out upon the mud bank for the eager newcomers to go ashore.

A passenger landing here and asking for a tavern would probably be directed to fat, jolly Bob Kinney, who occupied the largest stump along the bank, and be told that he was the owner of the Iowa House which stood some sixty feet to the north.

Robert C. Kinney, a rotund, pleasant old fellow,

was the first landlord of Bloomington. He had constructed the rear part of his tavern, a story and a half frame structure, in 1836. This building, about sixteen by thirty feet in size, contained three rooms below and three above, and stood well back on the lot.

In two years increased business, due largely to the steady arrival of immigrants to the new country, made it necessary for Kinney to enlarge the Iowa House. Accordingly, he added a front part some thirty by forty feet in size and two stories high, built at right angles to the rear portion. This addition filled the lot to the street.

A two-story veranda extended along the entire front, the lower porch up some four feet from the ground and reached by a flight of steps in the center. This porch became a favorite loafing place because the cool breezes off the river swept it of an evening and it commanded an unobstructed view of the broad curve of the Mississippi, the wooded island down stream, and the green, brush-covered Illinois shore opposite. Usually the ladies occupied the upper porch, while the men on the lower part smoked, told stories, and slapped mosquitoes.

The entire structure, both the new and old parts, was built largely of lumber prepared near the site. The floors, doors, and window frames were made of sawed lumber; the lath, shingles, studding, siding, and rafters were split or hewn from large oak trees which had grown nearby. It was the stumps of

these trees which afforded comfortable seats for the townspeople who came down to view the boats and the river.

The popular landlord of the Iowa House was fat and lazy but big-hearted and generous, and his boarders — nearly all the unmarried doctors, lawyers, and merchants of Bloomington — delighted in playing tricks on him for the fun of getting him excited. The knives and forks at the Iowa House were the common iron type then in use. If one of the tines of the two-tined forks became bent or blunt some one of the boys would jab it up under the bottom of the table top and there let it stick. Then he would call for another one. The lumbering innkeeper, finding that his forks were disappearing, would drawl, "Gor Almighty, Meriah, what got all the forks?"

Kinney set as good a table as the times would permit. Bacon, beans, and bread were staple dishes and occasionally apple sauce added a pleasant variety. He had neither stove nor range; all the cooking was done in a large stone fireplace in the house and in a baking oven located in the back yard. He gave notice that a meal was ready by ringing a bell which hung in a sort of a chicken coop arrangement on top of the tavern. The clang of the dinner bell brought the boarders pell mell into the dining room and at the same time served as a sort of town clock for the settlement.

Another favorite trick of the young men of Bloom-



ington was to remove this bell under cover of darkness and to hide it in the brush. Great was the glee at the excited outburst of the landlord when he pulled the bell rope the next morning and heard no resulting clang.

Whenever an itinerant minister came along Bob Kinney threw open his doors and permitted the free use of his tavern for a religious service. Likewise, he permitted the few travelling exhibitions or shows to use his dining room for an amusement hall. His tavern, too, was always open as a hospital for the sick who needed the special care and attention of the bachelor doctors who boarded with him. Fat and clumsy though he was, Bob Kinney had a generous heart and sacrificed his own income to help those in need.

Dances also were held in the old Iowa House, the quadrille being the favorite although the "Virginia Reel", the "French Four" and "Money Musk" were likewise popular. One Bloomington young dandy of 1840 trapped muskrats to get money enough to buy him a fashionable outfit to attend the cotillion parties at Kinney's tavern.

He bought broadcloth, mouse colored, for the coat, and the local tailor made him a stylish garment of the claw hammer pattern with long wide padded tails. His waistcoat was a double breasted effect in black satin, quite fancy; his trousers, light colored and tight fitting, spread at the ankles in the so-called spring bottom style and fastened under his calf skin

boots with a strap. A standing collar reaching up to his ears, tied around with a black silk stock, and a tall gray beaver hat completed his stylish attire. Little did he begrudge the two dollars he had to pay for his ticket the first time he wore the suit, for he knew that his chances would be good to dance every tune even though there were only two women for every three men.

The Iowa House offered few of the accommodations of the modern hotel. Three or more beds occupied each room and they were not considered filled unless at least two people slept in each. Oftentimes they held three. No screens kept out the mosquitoes and flies, and bathing facilities were crude. It is related that a stranger arrived and stayed over night. In the morning he asked landlord Kinney where he might wash. Bob inquired if he had a handkerchief. The roomer replied that he had. Whereupon Bob drawled, "Wall, thar's the river, wash thar, and wipe on your handkerchief."

In the early '40's Kinney decided to abandon the more or less unprofitable business of keeping an inn and arranged to rent his tavern to Captain William Fry. Feeling that he should have an iron-clad lease drawn up, Bob went to his lawyer boarder, S. C. Hastings, and stated his requirements. Hastings, seeing a chance to square up a goodly portion of his unpaid board bill, took up the job. He covered several pages of legal cap with old English law terms, then read the finished product to Kinney. It suited

the latter entirely who seemed to like its legal verbiage and he accepted the document. Thus Hastings paid, some say \$25, others \$50, of his long overdue board bill, and Kinney turned over his Iowa House, Bloomington's first hostelry, to a new landlord.

If the newcomer to Bloomington in 1839 was dissatisfied with the accommodations and hospitality at Bob Kinney's tavern he could walk one block east and another north to the Lawson House located on what is now the corner of Iowa Avenue and Second Street.

This house, the second tavern in Bloomington, had been erected in 1837 for John Vanatta by William Gordon and half a dozen workmen who boarded at the Iowa House during the time of construction. Oak timber for this building was cut on and near the site where it stood. The shingles, weatherboards, framing timbers, and floors all were of oak hand-hewn.

When completed, the house was a two-story affair about twenty by forty feet in size with a one-story kitchen forming an L at the rear. A double porch ran the entire length of the building on the Avenue side, the upper part being sheltered by the projecting roof of the house. The porch and roof over it were supported by plain posts, and a railing ran along the front and sides of the upper veranda. There were doors above and below with windows on either side fronting the Avenue, and another door,

on the corner near Second Street, afforded an entrance on that side. A square wooden post with chamfered corners stood on the street corner supporting a lantern which burned fish or whale oil. All in all the new tavern with its light post sign was the most pretentious effect in the little town and the residents pointed with pride to their new hostelry.

John Vanatta, a large, heavily built man who had been a captain in the Black Hawk War, opened a tavern in the new building as soon as it was completed. However, he soon grew tired of the position of landlord and rented his hotel. In 1839 Josiah Parvin secured the Lawson House and began to give Bob Kinney real competition.

Parvin, a kind-hearted courteous host, ran the hotel for a year when his greatly increased business made it necessary to build a new structure to accommodate his guests. His own sociability and the friendliness of his accomplished family created a type of hospitality that brought guests to his tavern. Moreover, a table loaded with the best the times afforded soon gave his establishment a reputation that extended up and down the river and to the interior of the new Territory. Consequently, he captured the lion's share of the hotel trade of Bloomington.

Governor Lucas and his suite stopped with Landlord Parvin in 1839 when they visited the new town. The presence of the tall, dignified Governor of Iowa Territory and his staff at the Lawson House was an honor indeed and it gave the place added prestige.

It became the stopping place for all the notables who came to Bloomington.

Parvin though pleasant and kindly was also excitable, and the boys took fully as much delight in baiting him as they did his rival, Bob Kinney. All that was necessary to send Josiah into an excitable tirade was to suggest that Andrew Jackson was dishonorable. At such a time his vigorous language would attract a circle of amused listeners who would urge him on by other jibes at the Democrats.

A third hostelry of early Muscatine was the picturesque and unique tavern kept by Captain James Palmer, which became known to the trade as "Captain Jim's".

He occupied the one story frame house which stood back a little from the street, on the north side of what is now Second Street, about half way between Iowa Avenue and Chestnut Street. This building had been begun by Suel Foster and his brother, a stone mason, in 1838, but not completed for want of lumber. They had built the basement of white stone blocks blasted and quarried out of the sandstone bluff. On this solid foundation they built the framework, studding, braces, joists, and rafters of split white oak.

Judge Joseph Williams who had come to Bloomington and was looking for a home purchased the partially completed house from the Fosters and secured William Gordon, the builder of the Lawson

House, to complete the work. When completed in 1839 the house made a snug and commodious dwelling. The roof sloped down over a porch in front which was supported by plain posts or pillars, and several steps led up to this veranda.

After the house came into the possession of Captain James Palmer he ran the following notice in the *Bloomington Herald*:

#### A PROCLAMATION

Whereas, I, Capt. Jim, long a dispenser of food to the hungry and a couch to the weary, as well as a "horn" to the dry, having taken possession of that large and commodious house on Second street, Bloomington, Iowa, formerly the residence of His Hon. J. Williams, do hereby declare and make known to the world that I am now prepared at the sign of Capt. Jim, to accommodate those who may call upon me, in a satisfactory manner, otherwise they go scot free. That the statement may the more fully prove true, I hereby declare and make known that the following are my charges, for all of which the best the market can afford are furnished.

Single meal	25
Board per day with lodging	75
Three days, per day	62½
Per week	3 00
One horse feed	12½
Horse per night	25
Horse per week	1 62½

All other bills in proportion. I, the said Capt. Jim, do hereby further declare to those indebted to me for eating, sleeping, drinking, or upon contract of any kind whatsoever, that unless they come forward immediately and make



settlement, Michael Scot was never in Scotland if I don't send a constable after them to bring them to "taw". So look out for Conklin or Ward.

Thankful for past favors, he hopes to receive a share of public patronage corresponding with his efforts to minister to the tastes and render comfortable those who may favor him with their patronage.

CAPT. JIM PALMER.

Captain Jim like Bob Kinney was a large fat old fellow and he was a good customer at his own bar. His place was not as quiet as the Iowa House but, nevertheless, it was a good place to stop, for the bluff old landlord treated the stranger who had no money as well as the man who had plenty. His tavern was a favorite loafing place for the boys who wanted to smoke, to swap yarns, and to get a drink, but Captain Jim, while enjoying his fun with the rest, usually kept his customers in hand.

His sign hung some twelve feet above the ground on the ugliest piece of timber obtainable, a crooked stick about eight inches in diameter. Crooked branches about twenty inches long had been left sticking out at irregular intervals to embellish the main stock. This sign of Captain Jim's was easily the most prominent object on Second Street.

Dan Rice, the old showman, relates that the first time he played Bloomington early in the forties, he stopped at "Capt. Jim's" with his troupe and arranged to give his performance in the tavern. The landlord suspicious of the showman's financial status demanded his pay in advance but agreed to



wait when Rice offered to make him doorkeeper and ticket seller for the show. Rice, therefore, proceeded to stage his exhibition.

When the show was over Rice asked Captain Jim for the money but the host hadn't a cent. He knew everybody in Bloomington and everybody knew him, and being of a generous and accommodating disposition, he did not have the heart to charge his friends admission. Consequently he had no receipts for Rice and the latter had no funds with which to pay his lodging.

Thus did the bluff old Captain along with his contemporaries dispense hospitality in the early days of Muscatine, and perhaps in some respects his tavern surpassed the others in conviviality.

These three taverns of Bloomington were typical of the early Territorial lodging places and are unique only in the fact that incidents which occurred in them have been preserved. Their fireplaces furnishing warmth and cheer on wintry evenings, their tallow dips in tin reflectors hung on the wall and affording feeble illumination, their total lack of the comforts of the modern hotels, were duplicated in every town of the Territory. Governor Lucas found no better conveniences or greater hospitality in his swing around the Territory he governed than he did at Bloomington. The taverns and their landlords everywhere were conspicuous and always played a prominent part in the pioneer drama.

BRUCE E. MAHAN

## Comment by the Editor

### THE BAEDEKERS OF IOWA

It was not for the information or the entertainment of those who lived in the countries they described that the little fat red books full of fact and historic lore and legend and description used to appear, but for the enlightenment of those who might come from afar. So in the early days when Iowa was the goal of tourist and emigrant, there appeared little pocket-size books, slender but full of optimism, and usually accompanied by that most alluring of all baits — a bright-colored folding map.

They were usually published in New York or Philadelphia; they had wide circulation in the east, and some of them found publication and circulation in England and other European countries. They constitute in all a goodly number of volumes, but there is time before we come to the last page of this sketch to take down from the shelf and examine at least one of those handbooks which were published in the Territorial days.

The most interesting of all is probably the earliest. The copy before us — one of a very few in existence — is a thin paper-bound volume not quite four by six inches in size. On the blue stained cover one reads: *Notes on the Wisconsin Territory; particularly with reference to the Iowa District or Black*

*Hawk Purchase.* It is the work of Lieutenant Albert M. Lea, of the United States Dragoons, and bears the date of 1836. The title is somewhat misleading for the content of the book, save for a copy of the act establishing the government of the Territory of Wisconsin, deals with the part of the Territory lying west of the Mississippi River, a tract of land which here has associated with it for the first time the name of Iowa.

Lieutenant Albert M. Lea had travelled over much of the country he describes, in company with the United States Dragoons in the summer of 1835, and he tells us in a preface that he "has been sedulous in collecting information from surveyors, traders, explorers, and residents."

In forty-two pages and a map he gives to the world this information. He locates the land and describes the climate and the seasons, all of which he finds charming. He commends the soil, but not being a prophet he does not do it full justice. He waxes eloquent, however, when he describes the "general appearance of the country". The products, the wild game, the population, trade, government and land titles he touches with a facile and enthusiastic pen.

One chapter deals with "Water Courses" and the final one with "Remarks upon Towns, Landings and Roads", wherein we find familiar names and some that are not so familiar. Under the heading "Kasey's", we learn that "A gentleman of this name intends laying out a town at the head of the Musca-

tine Slue.” Next comes the name “Iowa”. “This is the name of a town to be laid out at the mouth of Pine river, about 330 miles above Saint Louis.” Lieutenant Lea has great hopes for this town. “It possesses the most convenient landing from Burlington to the head of the Upper Rapids; and no place could be better adapted to the erection of buildings. The harbour of Pine river runs through the town, affording good landings on both sides; and boats may land anywhere on the Mississippi shore, for a mile and a half above the mouth of Pine.” And he is so impressed with its location that he remarks: “Should the seat of Government of the future State of Iowa be located on the Mississippi, it would probably be fixed at Iowa.” On a modern map we have located Pine River, or rather Pine Creek, ten miles above Muscatine, but no town named “Iowa” seems to be yet ranged along its harbour.

The lieutenant mentions Parkhurst and says: “Of this place, not yet laid out, it is sufficient to say that the site is beautiful, the landing good, building material convenient, and the back country fine. There is nothing wanting to make it a town but the people and the houses, and these will soon be there.” The town of Parkhurst did actually materialize but it soon merged with Le Claire and lost its original name. Burlington, Dubuque and Davenport each has a paragraph or two, and so have Throckmorton’s Landing, and Clark’s Ferry, Catfish, and Riprow.

In spite of its early date no book with the same amount of information appeared for at least five years. Yet to Albert M. Lea it was only meant as a beginning. "The reader will perceive", he says in his preface, "that the following '*Notes*,' are confined to such subjects only as are interesting, particularly to the emigrant, the speculator, and the legislator. The author reserves for another work, the notice of such topics connected with that country, as are better suited to the more general reader." Unhappily Lea never fulfilled the promise which his good intentions led him to make.

J. C. P.

# The **PALIMPSEST**

SEPTEMBER 1922

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT IOWA CITY BY  
THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA



## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

The PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

*Superintendent*

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## THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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PRICE—10c per copy: \$1 per year: free to members of Society  
ADDRESS—The State Historical Society Iowa City Iowa



# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN ELY BRIGGS

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VOL. III

ISSUED IN SEPTEMBER 1922

NO. 9

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## A Day at New Melleray

For some time as we travelled along the Old Military Road we had been watching for the first glimpse of the Abbey of New Melleray where Trappist monks under a rule of silence live a life of Old World fervor. Suddenly, as we rounded a bend in the road we saw over the tops of the intervening hills the gleam of the red and gray slate roof of the monastery. As we turned off the main highway and surmounted these hills we came again and again into full view of what seemed like a Gothic building of mediaeval Europe. Its white stone walls with arched windows, its buttresses and spires and ornamental chimneys were set on the crest of a hill within a frame of trees and green fields. In reality it was neither mediaeval nor European: the background was an Iowa landscape near Dubuque, and the time was June of 1922. We were coming in a motor car to spend a day at this house of silence.

The road wound past the red brick parish church with its nearby cemetery, down a short hill, and over a small stream to the outer gate of the monastery park. A sign at the side read: "No Visitors Allowed on Sunday". But on this day the open gate foretold our welcome. Through the wide gateway we turned the car, thence up a winding, tree-lined driveway, and came to a stop in front of an inner gate of the park just outside a long, two-story building which later we learned was the lodge or guest house.

No one was in sight at first, but in a moment or two a black pony ridden by a man in a white robe and black scapular emerged from a pine grove at the foot of the hill and, galloping at full speed up the hillside, disappeared behind the barns to the north of us. In a short time the rider reappeared walking toward us from the stable where he had left the pony. As he drew near we climbed out of the car to greet him. A man of striking appearance he was in his priestly robes, his face covered with a dark-brown pointed beard, his feet shod in white woolen stockings and heavy low shoes.

Father Eugene listened respectfully while I explained my errand and asked if I might spend a day at the monastery. Assuring me that I was welcome, he then asked the make of car in which we had come and volunteered the information that he had only recently learned to run the Hupmobile belonging to the monastery. Speaking in a rich brogue, which

confirmed his statement that he had come from Ireland within the year, he said: "I have trouble frequently with the Hupmobile. The garage man says it is in perfect mechanical condition but in spite of that sometimes it won't go."

With a twinkle in his blue eyes he turned to me and asked: "You might be thinking of joining us, perhaps?" My answer that a wife and son disqualified me, even if I wished to do so, brought a genial chuckle entirely inconsistent with an austere outlook on the things of the world which a life of daily piety might be expected to produce.

In reply to our question as to how many monks there were at New Melleray, he said: "Twenty-four now — not enough to do all the work on the estate, and so we hire from fifteen to eighteen farm hands to help in the busy season." The farm, he explained, included some three thousand acres, a large part of it timber, pasture land, and extensive meadows, with three hundred acres planted in corn and small grain. He told us that the Abbot, Father Alberic, had died in 1917, that no successor had been elected by the community, and that Father Bruno Ryan who had arrived from Ireland in 1914 was the Superior or Acting Abbot.

My friends who had brought me to the monastery departed for Dubuque, and Father Eugene suggested that he would take me to Brother Bernard, the Guest Brother, who would show me anything I wished to see. Accordingly we entered the unlocked

gate of the park, which is accessible to both men and women, and passed through the side entrance of the lodge into a hallway. The pious Father asked me to wait in a room that opened off the hallway until he could find Brother Bernard; then silently he left me, moving away with a swinging stride developed perhaps by pacing the cloister. I looked at my watch. It was ten o'clock. My day with the Trappists had begun.

I sat in a narrow room furnished with a kneeling bench at one end and a reading desk at the other above which hung a silver crucifix. In the center of the room extended a long table, oil cloth topped, with several chairs on either side. This room, I learned later, was used on Sundays as a meeting place for the farm laborers to listen to instruction by one of the priests of the abbey. In a few minutes there appeared in the doorway a bearded figure in a brown habit, who welcomed me warmly. His beard and close-cropped hair were of a reddish tint, his eyes blue, his manner mild and friendly. He told me he was Brother Bernard whose duty it was to meet the guests and to cook for the hired men, and asked me what I wished to see first, suggesting that I plan to return for dinner at eleven-thirty.

I asked if I might see the Superior. He motioned me to follow and, passing out through the screen door of the lodge, he led me to an ornamental wooden gateway surmounted by a cross. This gate he unlocked, explaining that although women were per-

mitted to enter the park none but men were ever allowed to enter the inner grounds of the monastery which were surrounded by a fence. Upon my remarking that it was a wonder some women didn't climb over, he replied that only a short time before an automobile with two women and two men had arrived while he was busy in the guest house and that before he could get outside the girls had climbed over the gate and the men had followed. Great was the commotion among the monks when they saw the women and Brother Bernard hurried the intruders from the enclosure.

Inside the enclosure I noticed several monks in the white habit and black scapular of the choir brothers hoeing down small weeds and raking the gravel pathways. One of these my guide pointed out as Father Bruno, the Superior. Trembling a bit inwardly as to my reception by the head of the abbey I removed my hat and addressed him, explaining my errand and showing him a copy of *The Palimpsest*. While he looked at it with interest, the rest of the monks went on with their work, paying no attention whatever to the intrusion. Then in a soft, melodious voice tinged with a brogue even richer than that of Father Eugene he made me welcome and asked me to excuse him a moment while he changed his heavy work shoes and hung up his wide-brimmed straw hat.

While he was gone I sat on one of the wooden benches in the cool shade of the pine trees and looked

about at a scene so strange that it seemed unreal. Here was the Gothic abbey with its pointed windows and doors, its ornamental buttresses, its slate roof and belfries, and its octagonal stone water-tower surmounted by a wrought iron fence. About the grounds were monks in white and monks in brown, mowing the thick turf of the grass plots, smoothing the gravel walks, trimming the deep-green arbor vitae hedge along the east side of the enclosure, and removing dead limbs from the pine trees.

A few minutes later Father Bruno beckoned to me from the east doorway of the abbey. As I entered he told me in a quiet, friendly tone that I could take any pictures I wished. His affable manner and sympathetic interest made me feel that Cistercian hospitality had not dimmed through the centuries.

First he led me through an entrance hall to the end of one of the long narrow cloisters, its green-tinted walls lighted by the sunshine streaming through narrow arched windows along one side. No pictures or statues relieved the bareness of the walls. Only a small sign which read, "SILENCE", reminded the visitor of the practice of the order.

From the cloister we entered a little chapel dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin. Two altars in white and gold, two statues — one of the Savior and the other of Mary — the pale blue walls and white ceiling heavily paneled with oak, and seats that matched the woodwork created a charming picture.



Next we visited the chapter room where the monks sit on low benches along the paneled side walls to hear the Abbot or Superior expound the Rule of St. Benedict or read the Martyrology. His elevated throne is at the end of the room and is covered with a carved wooden canopy. In this room the monks confess their violations of the Rule and receive their penance; and here, too, the assignments of the day are made by the Superior whose word is law in the community. Obedience is a vow which no Cistercian repudiates. A large, oval-topped table extends crosswise of the room at the end opposite the throne, and here on the benches along each side the monks sit and study during the hours for meditation and learning.

We took our leave in silence for an old, grey-bearded monk was reverently making the Stations of the Cross, silently praying before the framed pictures along the two side walls that depicted the fourteen stages of the road to Calvary. The soft light filtering through the stained glass windows upon the oak beamed ceiling and paneled walls painted a picture of sanctity beyond the doorway.

Upstairs we climbed, passing through the sacristy where the vestments and sacred vessels are kept, thence across the hall to the dormitory which occupies almost the entire second floor of the long wing of the abbey. I expected to see a dismal, cheerless place with planks for beds in a tiny darkened cell, for such was the impression I had brought to the



monastery. Instead there stretched before me a room at least one hundred and eighty feet long, with white side walls and blue, vaulted ceiling supported by massive walnut rafters. Many windows along each side supplied light and ventilation. A wide aisle extended down the center of the room, and on both sides, arranged in perfect alignment, were the cubicles or cells where the monks slept. Each cell was a box-like affair, stained dark, about seven feet long, four feet wide, and six feet high, and separated from the next in line by an interval of three feet. Within each cubicle a couch extended the entire length. Cross-slats of wood formed the support for a straw-filled mattress some three inches thick. On this was spread neatly a coarse sheet, two clean wool blankets, and a straw-filled bolster pillow, making a bed fully as comfortable as the regulation army cot or camp bed. Each cell contained, besides the couch, a holy water font and hooks for hanging the habit and hat. The cells were open at the top and a white curtain hung in front of each one that was occupied. Floors, cells, and bedding were spotlessly clean.

From the dormitory we descended the stairway to the first floor and thence down another flight of steps to the basement to visit the refectory or dining hall of the monks. In passing I noted the heavy foundation walls nearly four feet thick and the unoccupied portion of the basement extending under the chapel and chapter room. In the kitchen we found Brother Declan, the cook, preparing the mid-day meal. He

greeted the Superior with a bow, but spoke no word and turned back to his task of picking over lettuce. Heavy white dishes filled the drying racks along the wall of the scullery, and shining pots and pans hung on pegs beside the large range stove.

Through a door at the side of the scullery we entered the refectory, a severely plain room lighted by basement windows along one side. Across the end opposite the entrance stood a table with three straight backed chairs behind it, occupied at meal-time, my guide informed me, by the Superior, the Prior, and the Sub-Prior. Four plain tables with legs painted white and tops scrubbed clean lined each side of the room, behind which on oak stools or benches sit the monks at mealtime with their backs to the wall. At each place was a small name plate, a heavy cup, a steel knife, fork, and spoon, a brown earthenware pitcher, a salt cellar, and a large white canvas napkin. During the meal this napkin is spread out and the dishes placed upon it. Beside each place was a plate on which were two slices of bread — one white, one brown — and a small dish of honey. The dinner or principal meal of the day, Father Bruno said, would consist of bean soup, potatoes, lettuce, bread, butter, and coffee with milk and sugar added.

At dinner one of the monks would sit at the lectern or reading desk which stood by a window midway along one side wall and read from the Bible and some other pious book. Father Bruno opened

the desk and brought out for my inspection a Vulgate edition of the Bible dated 1688 and printed at Venice. Another book — a heavy leather tome — proved to be a collection of sermons and instructions written in beautiful penmanship by a monk at Melleray, France, in 1827. While I was admiring the handwriting and commenting on the immense amount of time it must have taken to prepare such a volume, the ringing of the chapel bell called my guide to his duties in the church and we parted company, he ascending the stairs to help chant that part of the Divine Office called Sext, and I leaving the monastery to return to the lodge for dinner.

The overall-clad farm hands had already returned from the fields and were standing beside the sturdy draft horses at the watering trough or were lolling in the shade on the lawn. The staccato bark of the gasoline engine pumping water shattered the ordinary stillness of the place. At eleven-thirty the ringing of a dinner bell by Brother Bernard summoned the men and myself to a large, plain room on the first floor of the old building where the monks lived while the stone abbey was being built. Here the laborers are now housed and fed. We sat down around a long table covered with a white oil-cloth, before a well cooked and wholesome meal of boiled potatoes, eggs, lettuce, baked beans, brown and white bread, butter, rhubarb sauce, and tea — not a dainty dinner but one that satisfied.

When dinner was finished the eighteen men went

outside and lay down in the shade to rest until twelve-thirty when again they watered the horses and set out to the work of plowing corn and making hay. While Brother Bernard and his helper cleared away the remains of the meal and washed the heavy dishes, I followed Brother Camillus, the farm boss, in his task of directing the afternoon work. He was a short, stocky man wearing a pair of heavy cow-hide boots and an old gray slouch hat, his brown habit held up to his heavy belt by a chain and leather cord on each side. Something about his size and walk, or perhaps it was his black beard tinged with grey or his crispness in giving orders and meeting the problems of the afternoon, reminded me of the appearance of General Grant.

A laborer approached and reported that the cows had broken through the fence of the pasture where a corner post had rotted off. With a few curt questions, Brother Camillus learned of the exact damage done and what would be needed for repairs; then striding to the carpenter shop he asked a workman to take a hammer, wire stretcher, staples, and a new post to replace the broken one. A conference with a horse buyer from Dubuque resulted in the sale of three fine four-year-old colts.

This seemed to be a favorable time to take some pictures; and so, while waiting for the Guest Brother to finish his work, I started out to explore the farm buildings. Half way up the hill northwest of the lodge were the charred remains and blackened stone

foundations of the large horse barn recently destroyed by fire. The loss was heavy. Fifteen of the sturdy work horses had perished in the blaze and tons of hay and large bins of small grain were totally destroyed. Nothing remained of the huge structure except the limestone foundation — a rectangular basement some fifty feet wide and three hundred feet long.

A modern corn crib with a driveway through the center and cribs on each side, the outside of the structure painted white and trimmed in red, stood inside the feed lot east of the ruins of the barn. A gallery extended the entire length along the south side from which corn could be scooped into the cement-floored feeding pens for hogs below.

Northeast of the corn crib two well ventilated cow barns equipped with stanchions around the sides with space for hay in the middle disclosed the care taken of the cows which furnish a large part of the food supply of the institution. Windmills provided a supply of cold water for each of the barns and the hog lot. The white walls trimmed in green, the metal roofs, and the cupolas of the cow barns were conspicuous in the setting of pine and maple trees.

Between the cow barns and the lodge was located a stone one-story carpenter shop where the aged carpenter was at work repairing some broken farm machinery.

Observing Brother Bernard come out of the lodge and sit down on one of the benches in the park, I

rejoined him there and for the next hour bothered him with questions which he graciously answered. He said that from Easter until September the monks take a siesta or afternoon nap from twelve-thirty to one-thirty; but since his duties as Guest Brother require him to stay awake during the siesta he is permitted to sleep until three o'clock in the morning, thereby getting his seven hours of sleep at night. From September until Easter the monks retire an hour earlier at night and dispense with the siesta during the day.

I asked about the churning and laundry work. He answered that both are done by electricity now, and that the old building which I saw to the east, and which in the fifties had been the monastery, housed the laundry and the bake shop. When I remarked about the beauty and well kept appearance of the trees in the park he told me that many varieties were represented there — the hemlock, the larch, the Norway spruce, both hard and soft maple, the basswood, and the white pine.

At his suggestion we set out to look at the shrubbery, flowers, and trees of the park and the enclosure. We were the only figures astir at this drowsy hour of early afternoon — the farm hands had disappeared to the fields and the monks were asleep in their cells. We strolled past the new cemetery where a huge granite cross marks the grave of the late Abbot, Father Alberic, and small, plain iron crosses inscribed with the names of the monks and the date



of their death, face the rising sun in rows. Brother Bernard denied the tale I had heard that as soon as one monk dies a grave is dug for the next and that each day a shovelful of earth is turned to remind the monks of death. The idea sprang, perhaps, from the fact that when a member of the community is buried the place for the next grave is marked out but not dug.

Along the fence of the new cemetery rows of salvia were growing which in the fall would raise their flaming spikes in blossom, and wild flowers, blood-root, and sweet william joined the roses and peonies in decorating the burying ground. We turned our steps into the avenue of tall pine trees which, extending east, then north, then east again, joined the abbey with the orchard and passed one of the extensive gardens and the vineyard. Overhead the interlocking branches formed an arch and made a shady, silent, outdoor cloister. The June sunshine breaking through fell in bright splotches on the walk strewn with pine needles and packed hard by years of use.

Returning, we passed along the well trimmed arbor vitae hedge — a close packed wall of green over eight feet high and six feet thick at the base tapering to a rounded top. Extending for two hundred yards along the east side of the park and enclosure, it formed one of the beauty spots of the monastery grounds. Close by the eastern door of the abbey another hedge of the same type enclosed



the old burying ground where twenty-six iron crosses mark the graves of the monks who first came to New Melleray in 1849. Within this hallowed spot the grass was closely cropped over the graves whose tops were level with the aisles between them. Two rose bushes and four flaming peonies added a touch of brighter color to the green of the lawn and hedge. A white, wooden cross set in the center of the square towered above the encircling wall.

We had returned to the benches when the bell on the abbey tower summoned the monks from their siesta to the church to recite the Office of None, after which they would work for two hours outside. When I expressed a desire to see the gardens Brother Bernard said that he would turn me over to Father John, the gardener, as soon as he appeared. As we sat down the sound of the chanting of None could be heard through the open windows of the church.

Soon after the sound died away the monks in white and monks in brown emerged one by one from the doors of the monastery — most of them wearing wide-brimmed straw hats, all with the lower part of the robe held up by a chain and strap arrangement fastened to the heavy leather belt. Silently they went about the tasks assigned to them by the Superior. Brother Stanislaus, the bee-keeper, inspected his gable-roofed, cupola-topped hives; Brother Kieran, the herdsman, strode off to the cow barns; while Brother Patrick, the baker, departed to the bake shop to finish the work of the day. My guide

pointed out Father John, and I caught up with him as he trudged with his hoe under his arm down the pine walk to the gardens.

He was a stalwart man and gray bearded; sixty-nine years of age, he said. For twenty-five years he had been a parish priest in Wisconsin before he joined the Cistercians. He took considerable pride in the gardens; and just cause he had, for they showed the careful attention of an expert. Long straight rows of lettuce, parsnips, carrots, onions, early and late cabbage, tomatoes, sweetcorn, and beans filled two plots; cucumbers and melons grew in another; while potatoes occupied a third. He showed me his tobacco patch where thrifty plants were making a healthy growth, then the vineyard from which the monks sold over seven thousand pounds of grapes last season. Prospects for another big crop were good. Before prohibition, he said, wine was made for the refreshment of visitors and for the brothers but now only enough was produced for altar purposes, the rest of the grapes being sold. Blackberries grew wild in the timber, so that it was unnecessary to cultivate them.

We passed through the orchards loaded with tiny apples of this year's crop and went on past the rhubarb bed which filled half the space of one of the large garden plots. Ahead of us an elderly monk was trimming the dead branches of a tree with a hand saw. Father John remarked: "Brother Nicholas there is eighty-nine years old. He can eat as



ABBOT ALBERIC IN THE GOWN OF A CHOIR BROTHER



good a meal as any man in the house. Of course he hasn't any teeth, but he slides it down just the same. He will take a bowl of soup with onions in it and digest it perfectly. Sure, it would kill me to do it."

We chatted awhile about the best sprays to kill insects and the best varieties of vegetables to raise. Then, leaving Father John hoeing a dust mulch around the late cabbage, I started out to visit the saw mill and blacksmith shop.

The whir of a circular saw in the mill, shaping logs into lumber for some of the nearby farmers, mingled with the ringing of steel on steel in the blacksmith shop. Through the doorway of the latter I saw the figure of the brother standing in the ruddy glow of the forge, his arms bare, the picture of strength, and it seemed hard to realize that all the brawn and muscle which stood out upon his corded arms was the result of a diet of milk, bread, and vegetables with no meat or fish. As I entered the doorway he looked up and smiled, but spoke no word, and went on with his task of welding a broken iron rod.

Retracing my steps to the enclosure I was admitted through the locked gate by Father Eugene who had returned from a business trip to the little town of Peosta, the post office of New Melleray. His duties as Procurator or business manager occasionally take him on trips to Dubuque or neighboring towns to sell the surplus products of the community, to purchase the few necessities not raised upon the

estate, to pay the taxes, or to buy needed machinery. He led me to a guest room in the downstairs portion of the east wing of the main building which we reached by entering a side door and passing through a hall. Then he excused himself to bring me some books and pamphlets dealing with the subject of monastic life in general and the Trappists in particular.

The room assigned me for the night by the Superior was clean and furnished with a single bed, a walnut dresser, a round-topped reading table, a rocker, and two straight backed chairs upholstered with horsehair cloth. All of the furniture was of the period of 1850 to 1860; it reminded me of one of the sets in John Drinkwater's play, "Abraham Lincoln", and would have delighted the heart of a collector of antiques. On the wall hung a picture of the Blessed Virgin, another of the Savior, one of St. Augustine, and a fourth showing a group of Cistercians in company with the Cardinal Protector of the Order. The bed composed of a mattress, clean sheets, a pillow, white blankets, and covered with a white spread proved to be comfortable. A small rug lay on the floor beside it.

I had scarcely explored the room when Father Eugene returned with reading material, saying that Vespers would begin soon in the main chapel or church upstairs and that supper would be served me in the dining room for guests immediately after the Vesper service ended. While we talked the tolling



of the chapel bell announced the hour for the last devotions of the afternoon. Together we paced the length of the cloister and climbed the stairs to the church in silence. Father Eugene left me to invest himself in the long white cowl with flowing sleeves worn by the choir brothers when they say the Divine Office, and I entered the single doorway of the church.

Opposite the door an altar finished in white with blue and gold ornamentation reached almost to the heavy, dark-stained rafters that stretched across the nave under the vaulted roof. Above the altar hung a large framed painting of the Savior crucified; on the left, a picture of the Blessed Virgin; on the right, one of the Good Shepherd. The absence of an altar railing emphasized the length of the nave; except for the fact that the altar was elevated two steps and the choir stalls one, there was no break in the floor space from the altar to the doorway.

On both sides of the church extended the stalls of the choir brothers, elevated some eight inches from the floor, and in front of them were placed the semi-circular stalls of the lay brothers, six of the former and twelve of the latter on each side. Two stalls at right angles to the others faced the altar, and between them and the door extended ten pews with kneeling benches. In the center of the aisle between the stalls stood a small reed organ; and in front, at the left of the altar, a pipe organ occupied the space.



The soft pink tint of the side walls and the blue of the vaulted ceiling blended pleasantly with the dark stained woodwork and the oak furniture.

As soon as the choir brothers, all in white, had filed into the church and taken their stations in the choir stalls they loosened the heavy brass clasps of the huge Psalters and began the odd and fascinating chant-like recitation of the Office. The lay brothers in brown stood in their circular stalls below and in front of the choir, facing each other across the aisle of the nave, earnestly praying and joining in the responses. Longfellow's poem, "King Robert of Sicily", came to my mind as I recognized an occasional "Gloria Patri", an "Ave Maria", and heard the priests chant the "Magnificat". When the Vesper Office ended the monks prayed silently for about ten minutes until the bell rang again, and then quietly followed the Superior to their supper.

I had scarcely returned to my room when a brown-clad brother entered and motioned me to follow him. He led me down the hallway and through a door into a narrow, high-ceilinged dining room where he had already laid out my supper on the oval-topped table. Here, too, the furniture was of the Civil War period. A walnut, hand-carved cupboard with drawers below and glass doors above stood in one corner: the table, also of walnut and covered with a snowy cloth, filled the center of the room. Six dining room chairs of the low, square-backed, cane-seated type, and a square serving table completed the furnishings of

the room. The brother withdrew to the refectory for his simple meal of bread and butter, lettuce, tea with milk and sugar, and honey while I ate heartily the hot supper of potatoes, poached eggs, bread and butter, blackberry jam, tea, angel food cake, and fruit. Again the far-famed hospitality of Cistercians to their guests was demonstrated.

A little while after I returned to my room my courteous host, Father Bruno, entered to tell me to sleep as late as I wished in the morning and to bid me good-night, for, he explained, after the evening service of Compline, the monks retired to their cells without speaking a word. Upon my expressing a desire to arise at two o'clock to follow through the religious part of a Trappist's day he graciously assented to see that I was awakened, and after explaining that Compline would begin ten minutes after the ringing of a little bell which summoned the monks to Chapter for meditation, he left me to send Father Eugene to my room with an alarm clock. My genial Irish visitor and I discussed the founding and the history of the Cistercians until the bell called him to Chapter.

After a few minutes I strolled down the cloister and ascended the stairway to the church where promptly at seven the brothers followed. Each one as he arrived at his place in the choir saluted the Blessed Sacrament with a profound bow. When the last tone of the bell announcing Compline died away, all the monks faced the altar, made the sign of the

cross and, bowing again towards the tabernacle, began the solemn and beautiful chanting of the last part of the Divine Office.

The slow, deep-toned chant of the Latin with pauses between the verses, the humble bow when the words "Gloria patri, filii, et spiritus sancti" were reached, and the slowly fading light of evening which dimmed the huge rafters and the vaulted roof produced an effect of great solemnity. Except for the green-shaded electric reading lamps that threw their rays on the open pages of the huge Psalters and made it possible for the monks to read the words and notes standing back in their stalls three feet away from the desk, the scene was a reproduction of a monastic chapel of the Middle Ages.

The chorus singing of the famous "Salve Regina" closed Compline — the blending of the rich tenor and bass voices of the monks in the slow deliberate tones of this anthem creating a strain of passionate fervor and pleading. As the last notes of the song died away the chapel bell chimed in, ringing the Angelus, and each brother prostrated himself with head bowed low to recite it silently. All joined then in repeating six "Our Fathers", six "Hail Marys", and six "Glorias", followed by the reciting of "The Litany of the Blessed Virgin". After a few minutes spent in pious examination of conscience the monks filed out in pairs. They were sprinkled with holy water by the Superior as they passed him at the doorway and bowed a silent good-night on their way

to their cells. At this time all refrain from speaking, even to guests: "the great silence" leaves their minds wholly free to think of God.

I followed the procession and turning downstairs passed through the now darkened cloister to my room. At eight o'clock all lights in the monastery save my reading lamp were out; all sound except the scratching of my pen and the rustle of my notes were hushed; all inhabitants of the abbey were in bed except the guest. For two hours I jotted down impressions of the day and skimmed through the booklets left by my genial host. The hands of the "Big Ben" pointed to ten o'clock when I snapped off the light and settled down for a four-hour sleep.

It seemed that I had hardly closed my eyes when the raucous jingle of the alarm jerked me wide awake. Two o'clock! The Trappist's day had begun. I stepped across the pitch dark hallway to the bathroom and bathed my face in cold water to drive away the lingering desire to sleep another hour or two; then dressing hastily, I groped my way along the cloister and up the darkened stairway to the church.

The monks had already risen and had come to the chapel. Their morning toilet had been short, for they had slept fully dressed except that their shoes had been laid aside. The lay brothers were in their places and the choir monks, white-clad and ghost-like in their stalls, were intoning the opening verses of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin from mem-

ory. Save for the dim rays of the new moon which filtered faintly through the stained glass windows and the little tabernacle lamp that shed its reddish glow upon the altar, the church was in darkness. As the clock struck two-thirty the monks began half an hour of silent prayer that ended when the first faint light of early dawn began to make visible the objects within the chapel. At three the reading lamps were snapped on, the large Psalters were opened, and the chanting of Matins and Lauds of the Divine Office was begun. This lasted until four o'clock when each monk prostrated himself to say the Angelus. Then the lights were turned off and they all filed out, leaving the church silent and empty in the gray dawn.

A few minutes later a lay brother reëntered and went slowly to the altar, genuflected, and proceeded to light the two candles prescribed for low mass and a third for the missal. A hooded priest, followed by a second lay brother carrying the missal, approached the altar where he celebrated mass assisted by his brown-clad server. At the conclusion of the prayers that follow this sacrifice the celebrant and his server retired to the sacristy, and another choir monk and his assistant took their place to say a second mass. At the same time the other brothers in Holy Orders were celebrating mass in the smaller chapels across the hall and in the charming chapel beside the chapter room below. At these masses the lay brothers received Holy Communion.

When the masses were finished the monks returned to the church to recite Prime, both in the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin and in the Divine Office, which lasted some fifteen minutes. Then they descended to the chapter room to hear the Invitator read the Martyrology, to listen to a brief expounding of the Rule, and to say the "De Profundis" for their departed brethren. After this they departed to the dormitory to arrange their couches — a short and simple task. My watch indicated five-thirty. Three hours and a half had been spent by these pious monks in religious devotions before the rest of the world was stirring.

While the lay brothers descended to the refectory for their frugal breakfast of bread and butter and tea with milk and sugar, I wandered out to the east court of the enclosure to see the effect of the morning sunlight falling on the red and gray slate roof of the white walled monastery. Smoke curled up from the chimney of the bake shop and from the kitchen of the lodge where Brother Bernard had already prepared breakfast for the laborers. The grass was heavy with dew and the roses and peonies gleamed pink and white against the deep green of the hedges. No sound broke the stillness except the hum of the electric motor filling the stone-towered water tank of the abbey.

Soon Father Bruno appeared in the east door of the abbey to summon me to my breakfast, which he said was awaiting me in the dining room, and to tell



me that the next part of the Divine Office, Tierce, would be sung at seven-thirty and this would be followed by another mass. Thanking him I moved with alacrity to the dining room, for my early rising and subsequent experiences had whetted my appetite. The same brother who had served my evening meal the night before had placed on the table a breakfast of bread and butter, two soft boiled eggs, a plate of tender ham, and a pot of coffee with cream and sugar. Staying at a Trappist abbey as a guest, I thought, was a pleasure.

Breakfast finished I returned to my room to discover that it had been swept and dusted and the bed made during my absence. Shortly thereafter Father Bruno and Father Eugene entered, the former to answer some of my questions about the Order, the latter to offer to run me over to the Military Road in the abbey car when the time came to depart. We discussed the purpose of the monastic state until the chapel bell announced the hour for Tierce.

Once more I visited the church to hear for the last time on this visit the solemn chanting of the prayers and hymns that make up the Divine Office. The singing of the one hundred and eighteenth Psalm in Tierce that preceded the celebration of Holy Mass still rang in my ears as I returned to my room to pack my portfolio and my traveling bag.

Somewhat dazed by my experiences, I reflected that I had spent almost twenty-four hours with the Reformed Cistercians who practice daily at New



Melleray the austerities that originated at Citeaux in 1098 and follow the Rule proclaimed by St. Benedict from Monte Cassino about 535. Here in Dubuque County, Iowa, a few miles from the Mississippi, monks in the white robe of Citeaux and in the brown habit of St. Benedict tread the cloisters in silent prayer and spend their lives in a daily round of labor, prayer, and fasting in a quiet spot hard by a bustling city and modern countryside of the twentieth century.

As the morning sun mounted high in the heavens I took leave of my genial host, the good Father Bruno, and bade goodbye to Brother Bernard, he of the gentle mien. I climbed in the Hupmobile beside the white robed Father Eugene and together we climbed the hills and took the turns that led across the lands of the monastery to the Old Military Road. Over the smooth-topped, graded sections of this highway we rolled, past the old stage coach tavern and twelve mile house, past Fillmore Church and school, through the tiny village of Fillmore, up the long grade of a new section of the road leading to the narrow gauge crossing, and thence to the hill top east of Cascade.

"Yonder is Cascade, Father," I said.

"Ah, so soon," he responded astonished. "Indeed, I must be turning back."

He stopped the car and I alighted, thanking him for his kindness in bringing me back to my destination and for the courtesies shown me at the abbey.

He turned the car around and waving his hand started back to the monastery, eager to return to the daily round of prayer and work — to pray for a world that has almost forgotten how to pray, and to work not for himself but for charity. In imagination I heard the faint tones of the distant chapel bell calling back the absent monk to join his voice in the choir chanting the verses of the Divine Office.

BRUCE E. MAHAN

## **The Trappists in Europe**

The Abbey of Our Lady of New Melleray, located some twelve miles southwest of Dubuque, Iowa, houses the monks of the Reformed Cistercians commonly called Trappists. The founding of this monastery amid the undulating hills not far from the Mississippi three years after Iowa became a State, constitutes a chapter of a story which extends through the centuries.

In the year 1098 a small band of monks, dissatisfied with the laxity of their brethren at Molesme, France, set forth to find a new home where they could follow, unmolested, a strict observance of the ancient Rule of St. Benedict. Led by their saintly Abbot Robert, their Prior Alberic, and their Sub-Prior Stephen Harding, and carrying with them only the necessary vessels and vestments for celebrating mass and a breviary, they came to the dense and cheerless forest of Cîteaux in the Duchy of Burgundy. Here in a vast solitude they stopped to clear a space for a monastery. The Duke of Burgundy learning that some pious monks had settled upon his domain sent provisions and gave them cattle and land.

Within a year, however, Abbot Robert was ordered by the Pope to return to Molesme where the

monks were clamoring for his restoration. Alberic succeeded him as Abbot at Cîteaux and Stephen Harding became Prior. Under their jurisdiction the white habit with a black scapular was adopted — probably to contrast with the Cluniac monks — the meals were reduced to meager proportions, and lay brothers were introduced in order to permit the choir monks to devote more time to the Divine Office. These reforms, together with the practice of silence and strict observance of the Rule, have characterized the Cistercians through the ages.

With the death of Alberic in 1109 Stephen Harding became Abbot, and, according to the Cistercians of to-day, he was the true founder of the Order. He promulgated the “Charter of Charity”, a collection of statutes containing wise provisions for monastic government which are still followed, and applied the rule of poverty to the community as much as to the individual members. During the dark days when it appeared that the glory of Cîteaux would fade for lack of postulants, it was he who had the honor of receiving St. Bernard into the Order with thirty of his followers, friends, and relatives, many of whom were of noble birth.

The entrance of St. Bernard and his companions into the ranks of the Cistercians in 1112 was a signal for extraordinary development of the Order. It increased rapidly, branch monasteries were founded, and many congregations came under their rule. The

white-frocked monks acquired wealth through donations, and by their agricultural labors and economy — riches which they expended for the instruction of their followers, for charity, and for the extension of the Order. Travellers spoke of their hospitality. Their intellectual efforts produced manuscripts; their zeal helped spread the Romanesque and Gothic architecture throughout Europe; and they cultivated the arts of engraving and painting. This period of swift and brilliant development was the golden age of their history.

Then came a decline due to many causes. The disorders attendant upon the Hundred Years War led to a relaxation of discipline within the monasteries; the widely scattered abbeys made the visits of superiors increasingly difficult; and the practice of appointing “abbots in commendam” or abbots who might receive the revenues of the office without, perhaps, ever visiting the abbey over which they were supposed to rule, permitted habits of comfort to creep in, far from the intentions of the holy founders. Religious strifes, too, resulted in the formation of branches of the Cistercians.

Reform, however, was not far distant. The Abbé de Rancé (1626–1700) after a brilliant start in the world gave up his honors and his fortune and retired to the lonely solitude of the Abbey of La Trappe in the present Department of the Orne near Normandy. There as Abbot he succeeded in re-

instating an observance of the Rule of St. Benedict and the practices of the early Cistercians. The news of the piety and fervor of the monks at La Trappe spread throughout the monastic world. Just as the reforms of Citeaux had earlier restrained the growing laxity among the followers of St. Benedict, so now the reforms of the Abbé de Rancé brought the Cistercians back to their former glory. Thus the term "Trappist" has become indicative of extraordinary sanctity and austerity among the followers of the Order.

Next, the French Revolution played a part in the ancestral history of the Trappist abbey in Iowa. When the wrath of the Constituent Assembly fell upon the monasteries of France in the confiscatory decree of 1790, La Trappe was no exception and the next year beheld the monks scattered, the monastery buildings thrown down, and the land left uncultivated. In this state the abbey remained until it was repurchased and reinhabited after the overthrow of Napoleon.

One group of the monks at La Trappe fled to Switzerland under the leadership of Dom Augustine de Lestrange where they secured the ancient, deserted monastery of Val Sainte (Holy Valley). Here they followed again the austerities of La Trappe, and the Order prospered until the wars of Napoleon again made them wanderers.

In the meantime filtrations of monks had gone out





BROTHER TIMOTHY IN THE GARB OF A LAY BROTHER





from the mother house of Val Sainte to other parts of Europe. The Abbot of Val Sainte turned his attention to Canada also, and plans were made to establish a monastery there. In 1794 a band of monks under the leadership of Father John Baptist proceeded to London on their way to the New World. Although the English laws against Catholics and religious orders were still in force, this band of Trappists was received and protected by the British government under the pretense that they were French exiles. Their friendly reception in England caused them to abandon the Canada project and the monks settled down in a monastery built for them near Lullworth.

Here they remained from 1796 until 1817. Many Irish and English postulants joined the Order and the Abbot, unwilling to conform to the governmental warning to receive only French novices, obtained permission from the French King, Louis XVIII, to return to France. The Abbey of St. Susan of Lullworth was therefore abandoned and the community, numbering some sixty monks, embarked on July 10, 1817, aboard the frigate *La Ravanche*, which had been loaned them by the French King.

A month later found the community settled in the deserted monastery of Melleray in the Province of Brittany. Its buildings had survived the storm of the French Revolution and, although the lands were held by different owners, Dom Antoine, the Abbot,

secured a new home for his followers, partly by purchase and partly by donations.

But peace was short lived. The revolution of 1830 in France which deposed Charles X and placed the "Citizen King", Louis Philippe, on the throne engulfed the monks of Melleray Abbey in difficulty. They were accused of plotting against the new monarchy, of harboring Irishmen and Englishmen hostile to the new King, and of rebelling against the new régime. Accordingly, the expulsion of those monks under governmental suspicion by the French authorities left only a handful of French monks at Melleray, while the rest, embarking on a sloop of war, the Hebe, at St. Nazaire set sail for Cork, Ireland, where they arrived on December 1, 1831. For many years the abbey at Melleray languished but at length it revived and to-day is one of the greatest monasteries of the Order.

Before the storm had burst upon Melleray, Dom Antoine had sent emissaries to Ireland to seek a location in anticipation of the expected expulsion. Through their efforts a site was secured in the County of Waterford, near the town of Cappoquin, where the land was cleared and a monastery erected. Thus was established the Abbey of Mount Melleray, the mother house of the abbey in Iowa.

The Trappist abbey in Ireland prospered, and grew in numbers so rapidly that in 1835, even before the new abbey was completed, it was necessary to

send a few brethren to England to found another monastery. For a few years the overcrowded condition was relieved but scarcely more than a decade had elapsed before the population of Mount Melleray had again outgrown the monastery. It was in this exigency that the Abbot, Dom Bruno Fitzpatrick, turned his attention across the Atlantic, as a possible location for some of his monks.

BRUCE E. MAHAN

## The Abbey in Iowa

Toward the end of July, 1848, Father Bernard McCaffrey and Brother Anthony Keating set out from Mount Melleray to seek a new home in America. They inspected a site in Pennsylvania but it proved to be unsatisfactory and the mission failed. During the following January two more emissaries were sent to find a desirable location for a monastery in the United States. They were as unsuccessful as their predecessors.

When it seemed that further efforts to establish a branch of the Mount Melleray community in the New World would be futile an unforeseen incident turned the whole trend of events. Early in 1849 it happened that Bishop Loras of Dubuque, who was travelling in Europe, paid a visit to the Abbey of Mount Melleray and, learning of the unsuccessful attempt to found a Trappist monastery in America, offered the Abbot a tract of land in Dubuque County. Dom Bruno decided to accept the offer if the situation appeared suitable and wrote at once to Father Clement Smythe and Brother Ambrose Byrne, his representatives in America, to view the land. Father Clement sent Brother Ambrose to examine the tract, who, after a careful inspection, decided that the place met the requirements. Remote from the noise and distractions of the world yet it was suffi-

ciently near a city for all necessary intercourse; it was located in an attractive setting of hills and timbered valleys and had an abundant supply of water.

The generous offer of Bishop Loras was therefore accepted and Abbot Bruno set out for America accompanied by Father James O'Gorman and Brothers Timothy, Joseph, Barnaby, and Macarius. They arrived by way of Dubuque, and on the sixteenth of July, 1849, Abbot Bruno of Mount Melleray, Ireland, laid the foundation of New Melleray, Iowa. Father James O'Gorman was appointed Superior and Abbot Bruno returned to Ireland, leaving the small band of pioneer monks housed in a small frame building.

Work began immediately upon the construction of a monastery to accommodate the expected emigrants from the mother house. On the tenth of September, 1849, sixteen more members of Mount Melleray left for the new home in America. They sailed from Liverpool and disembarked at New Orleans. Thence they proceeded up the Mississippi by steamboat to Dubuque. Six of the group died of cholera on the river trip and were buried at different spots along the bank.

While part of the community engaged in breaking the prairie for the next year's crop, the others devoted the time not occupied by their religious duties in building the frame abbey which still stands in a good state of preservation. Work on this building

was pursued diligently during the fall and it was consecrated and occupied on Christmas day of 1849. Neither the sad fate of the brothers who had died on the trip nor the hardships of the journey prevented a third detachment of twenty-three from coming to New Melleray in the following spring. Thus in the course of a year the new monastery had relieved the congestion in the mother house and had begun a vigorous existence with nearly forty members in the new State of Iowa.

During the next ten years careful attention was given to improving the estate, which was enlarged by the purchase of an additional tract of five hundred acres. The prairies were broken and prepared for the seed that yielded bountiful harvests. The land was fenced and stock was purchased. Agricultural development was slow, however, for there was no revenue except from the sale of surplus products. Paying for the land, buying farm implements and stock, and building farm improvements exhausted the yearly income.

After the first decade, however, the community began to prosper. The land was fenced and under cultivation, over a hundred head of stock of the better breeds grazed in the extensive pastures, and the treasury showed a surplus. The brothers began to plan improvements. The year 1861 saw the erection of the mammoth barn — a two-story frame building fifty feet wide and three hundred feet long built on a limestone foundation. It was capable of holding



three hundred head of stock and a thousand tons of hay. Twice since it was built disastrous fires have destroyed the superstructure. Only last spring the great barn was burned to the ground leaving the strong foundation still unharmed upon which the structure will be rebuilt.

The sale of cattle during the Civil War was so profitable that the monks decided to use the money in fulfilling the long cherished wish to build a monastery which would be a worthy reflection of the zeal and piety of the Order. The plans provided for the erection of four large stone buildings in Gothic style around a rectangular court one hundred feet wide and two hundred feet long. Each wing was to be approximately thirty feet wide and thirty feet high with a gable roof of red and gray slate, cupolas or belfrys, ornamental buttresses, vaulted ceilings, and pointed arches for windows and doors. Ground was broken on March 8, 1868, and the building was occupied in 1875. Only two of the four wings have been finished, and the rough ends of limestone blocks still await the hoped-for day when a sufficient increase in new members will make it necessary to complete the monastery.

The north wing contains the dormitory, sacristy, and three small chapels above; the guest rooms, tailor shop, library, wardrobe, and storeroom below. The east wing houses the church above, while on the first floor are the chapel — dedicated to the Sacred Heart and the Blessed Virgin — and the chapter

room. An extension to the north contains the study rooms for the choir brethren, the water-tower, and the bath rooms. The refectory, scullery, and kitchen are located in the basement, while the cloisters extend around the inside wall of the two wings.

The improvements outside the enclosure include a saw mill, a blacksmith shop, a carpenter shop, cement feeding-pens, a corn crib, cow barns, and wind mills. The farm buildings are well constructed, painted, and equipped with modern appliances. In agriculture and stock raising the brothers are still leaders in the neighborhood.

A red brick parish church, situated about three hundred yards from the monastery on the road leading to the main highway, affords a place of worship for the neighboring farmers most of whom are of the Catholic faith. One of the monks, Father Placid, serves as the parish priest.

Amid these surroundings the Cistercian monks or Trappists perform their daily round of labor, prayer, and meditation. For seventy years the ancient austerities of Citeaux and La Trappe, modified somewhat by the Holy See and the Constitution of 1902, have been practiced in Iowa.

When Abbot Alberic of New Melleray died in 1917 after a rule of twenty years Father Bruno Ryan was appointed Superior. The Abbot wears no insignia of his rank except a plain ring on his finger and a simple cross of wood suspended from a violet, silken cord about his neck. He has no better food,

wears no richer dress, nor has he any softer bed than other members of the Order. He presides in the chapter room, assigns employments, and imposes penances. He sets an example of piety; while on his business judgment and that of his Procurator rests largely the temporal prosperity of the abbey. He is assisted in his many duties by a Prior and a Sub-Prior.

BRUCE E. MAHAN

## The Life of the Trappists

At New Melleray to-day are found the two classes of monks that have characterized Cistercian abbeys since the earliest days of the Order. The choir brothers are men who have been well educated and have a careful knowledge of the Latin tongue. They are the priests of the community and those studying for Holy Orders. Their dress in choir consists of a long white woolen tunic with flowing sleeves, with a capoch or hood attached. When at work they wear a white woolen habit, a black scapular with a hood, and a leather girdle.

The lay brothers on the other hand — among whom are many representatives of distinguished families who prefer the humbler rank — are usually men of less educational preparation than the choir brothers. They do the farm work, the cooking, the baking, the tailoring, the laundry work, and the more menial tasks about the monastery, thereby giving the choir brothers more time to devote to the Divine Office. At religious devotions the lay brothers wear a long brown robe with a hood, and at work their dress is a dark brown habit and a leather girdle. Their hair is close cropped and they wear beards.

The novices or postulants are admitted to the monastery for a probationary period to try their

strength and desire to continue the life. If, after a trial of two years, they wish to persevere, they are admitted by a vote of the community and the first vows are taken. From three to six years later the final vows are made which seclude them from the world. During the novitiate period the choir brothers wear a white robe with a scapular and hood of white, and a girdle of wool instead of leather. Since the use of linen is forbidden to the monks all wear next to the body a light-weight undergarment of wool.

The idea that fasts and abstinences at New Melle-ray or at other Cistercian abbeys are perpetual hardships is largely erroneous. True, all in good health must abstain from flesh meat and fish at all times, but those who are weak or ill may have meat in the infirmary to repair their strength. Young men under twenty-one in the Order are not obliged to fast. The Trappists now partake of a light breakfast, a full meal at mid-day, and only meager refreshments in the evening. The food consists of vegetables, cereals, fresh bread and butter, milk, and cheese. Eggs are used in cooking and as a supplementary dish for those who have a special need. Fruit, too, forms an important part of the diet, and tea, coffee, and cocoa are used.

To an outsider the practice of perpetual silence seems harsh and austere, a means of penance and mortification of extreme difficulty. In practice, however, observance of the rule becomes relatively

easy, for a number of conventional signs are used to fulfill the common needs of communication. There are also certain exceptions. Any monk may always speak with his Superior. Others such as the Guest Brother, the Procurator, the farm boss, or those whose positions throw them in contact with outsiders have permission to speak. If necessary other members of the Order may obtain permission to talk. Nevertheless the monks feel that the practice is not a hardship but a blessing, believing with St. Ephrem that, "When there is silence in the mind, when the heart rests, when the hush of the world has breathed over the spirit, when the mind self-left, feels its loneliness, then comes the sweet and sacred communication with heaven."

Manual labor at New Melleray, both by the choir monks and the lay brethren, is one of the occupations of the community, but the amount is not excessive. Three to four hours daily by the choir brothers and twice as much by their brown-clad companions, equally divided between morning and afternoon, is the usual time spent at the various tasks of the Order. The distinction in the time allotted for labor is due to the fact that the lay brothers do not recite the Divine Office, although they share in the spiritual benefits derived therefrom and repeat privately a short Office of their own.

For several years the Abbey of Our Lady of New Melleray gave promise of becoming a flourishing community of the Cistercian Order, but of late years

the postulants and novices have been so few that the progress which characterizes the houses of the Order abroad has not been maintained. From fifty-four members in 1892 the number of monks has dwindled to twenty-four in 1922. When the visitor sees the extensive and well improved lands of the estate, the vacant cells in the large dormitory, and the empty stalls in the choir he wonders if this settlement of the Trappists in the Mississippi Valley will repeat the story of Cîteaux. Will New Melleray Abbey, which now seems to languish, wax vigorous in the future, spreading its influence afar and contributing to a revival of monasticism?

Certainly the five young monks from Ireland who have added their strength to the community within the past year and an awakened interest on the part of some young Americans in the Order furnish a hopeful portent to the able Superior, Father Bruno, and to the aged monks who have held to the ideals of the Cistercians so persistently during the past quarter of a century.

BRUCE E. MAHAN



## Comment by the Editor

TWO BY THE ABBEY BELL

Few people of their own accord arise with the sun, and fewer still retire at dusk. "To bed with the chickens" is a phrase of contempt; while the crowing cock is a discredited morning alarm. The hands of "Big Ben" instead of the sunbeam on the counterpane indicate the time for rising. It seems to be one of the perversities of human beings to prolong the night into the day and extend the day beyond nightfall. Only the inexorable necessities of life are sufficiently powerful to compel a person to face the toil of a new day. The dreadful experience is postponed until the last minute. Even an act of Congress proved unavailing, so the daylight saving law was repealed.

For nearly three quarters of a century the Trappist monks at New Melleray have been setting a steadfast example of daylight saving. No doubt they prefer God's light to human substitutes, but they outdo the sun in early rising. They reverse the usual custom and burn their candles in the morning.

On Sundays the Trappists arise at one instead of two — another reversal of common practice. There is an element of logic in this, however, when viewed philosophically. If one rises early on Sunday he may sleep late the rest of the week.

## THE USES OF ADVERSITY

The asceticism of the silent monks at New Melleray does not appeal to American youth. Religious zeal is not a prominent trait of the times. Monastic life in Iowa seems to be an anachronism. Seclusion is a characteristic of by-gone ages: now, one half of the world is determined to know how the other half lives. Communication between the ends of the earth is almost instantaneous, motoring across a continent is an epidemic, distance is well nigh abolished in fact as in theory, and the whole world is becoming cosmopolitan. When life is so full of adventure and knowledge is not all found in books, who wants to shut himself up in an abbey?

Yet monasticism has its advantages. Pledged to perpetual silence, to unremitting toil, to absolute poverty, to lifelong seclusion, and to intense religious devotion, the Trappist brothers probably experience a peace of mind impossible in the hurly-burly of the outer world. The attainment of spiritual aspirations, they are convinced, rewards the soul far more than the gratification of the natural instincts of an ephemeral life. While the nation is in the throes of war, while the politicians are puzzled with political problems, while laborers strike, while social customs come and go, there at New Melleray the disciples of St. Benedict remain, year after year — calm, devout, abiding. They are free from the turmoil of a nervous world.

## TRAPPISTS AND JESUITS

There are manifold methods of expressing spiritual fervor. Even among the monks there are several orders, each with its own set of vows and each with a different mode of living. Some, like the Trappists, are content with being good; while others, like the Jesuits, seek salvation in doing good. The former are chiefly concerned with themselves; the latter are pledged to carry the gospel to others.

As the annals of New Melleray Abbey are a part of the history of this State, so also the work of the Jesuits has a prominent place in the chronicles of Iowa. First came Father Marquette to explore the Mississippi and to preach to the Indians. He is the "Black-Robe chief, the Prophet" in the "Song of Hiawatha". That was in the reign of Louis XIV — in the glorious days of Athos, Porthos, and Aramis. Many were the black robed priests who followed their brother into the Great Valley, suffering the hardships of long and hazardous voyages with only their consciences to guide them and the sign of the cross for protection. Around their names are woven the adventures and achievements of the first white men in Iowa. The story of their exploits in New France is as picturesque as the D'Artagnan romances across the sea.

J. E. B.

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OCTOBER 1922

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THE EDITOR

PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT IOWA CITY BY  
**THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA**

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

The PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

*Superintendent*

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## THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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PRICE—10c per copy: \$1 per year: free to members of Society

ADDRESS—The State Historical Society Iowa City Iowa

# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN ELY BRIGGS

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VOL. III

ISSUED IN OCTOBER 1922

NO. 10

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## The Sioux City Corn Palaces

While nearly the entire country suffered from drouth in the summer of 1887 propitious showers saved the crops in the middle portion of the Missouri Valley. The corn fields of northwest Iowa yielded amazingly, and the concomitant hogs grew fat. In the midst of this fortunate region lay Sioux City, the prodigy of the West. From a bustling town of about seven thousand inhabitants in 1880 it had grown into a thriving city of approximately thirty thousand population—the third most important meat packing center in America. Within the year property values had increased enormously, extensive improvements were under construction, and thousands of people had come there to live. The future seemed assured.

Grateful for this extraordinary prosperity and in recognition of the decisive importance of the agricultural interests of the surrounding territory, sev-



eral of the prominent business men of Sioux City met on the evening of August 20th to devise a means of public expression of thanksgiving for the bounteous crops of the Northwest and the remarkable growth of the city. Various plans were considered. One man suggested a jubilee with heaps of corn along the streets as continual reminders of the cause of the festival. Another proposed to decorate the courthouse with cornstalks and make it a center for public speaking, music, and entertainment. Then came a brilliant idea. Why not build a palace of corn! Let the design be unique and appropriate, let the edifice be adorned with all the products of the field — though chiefly with corn — and within let there be music and dancing and artistic exhibits of produce.

It was an inspiration of the moment. The burst of enthusiasm that greeted the idea of a corn palace festival grew apace. The whole city caught the spirit of the occasion and the people of the surrounding territory became intensely interested. A town meeting was held the following week, an organization was formed with Mayor J. M. Clelland as president, committees were appointed, and work on the project began.

Meanwhile everyone was experimenting with grain as a medium of artistic expression. Corn seemed to be particularly well adapted to such a use. Indeed, for the time being, corn was apparently the most important article in the life of the com-



munity. The slogan, "Corn is King", appeared to be a veritable reality. Never was a monarch held in more reverential esteem by his subjects. Odes to corn flowed from the pens of numerous rhymesters: Longfellow's tribute to Mondamin, the god of corn, was quoted until everyone must have known it by heart: the newspapers were filled with articles explaining the origin of harvest festivals and discussing the function of Ceres, the goddess of grain. Corn parties were quite the vogue in social circles: the ladies came adorned with strings of corn beads while the gentlemen wore corn husk cravats. One facetious reporter declared that cornstarch had become a favorite food for the babies.

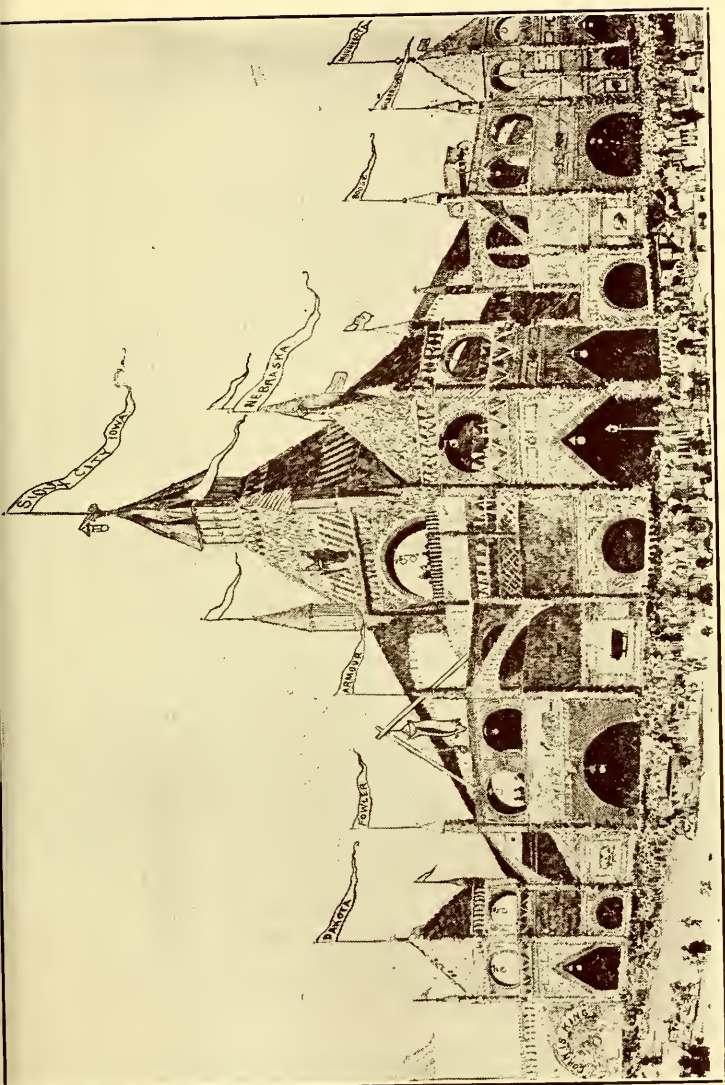
As the concept of a corn palace developed, the original plans were outgrown. At first it was estimated that five thousand dollars would be needed for the festival but later the sponsors of the exposition decided to raise as much as twenty-five thousand dollars if necessary. By the end of September the whole project had assumed so much importance and promised to be so successful that the Sioux City Corn Palace Exposition Company was organized and incorporated with a capital stock of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The corn palace itself, as originally designed by E. W. Loft, was to occupy a space one hundred feet square on the northwest corner of Jackson and Fifth streets, but two weeks before the opening it was decided to double the size of the building by extending it westward to

include the armory and adding two more pavilions.

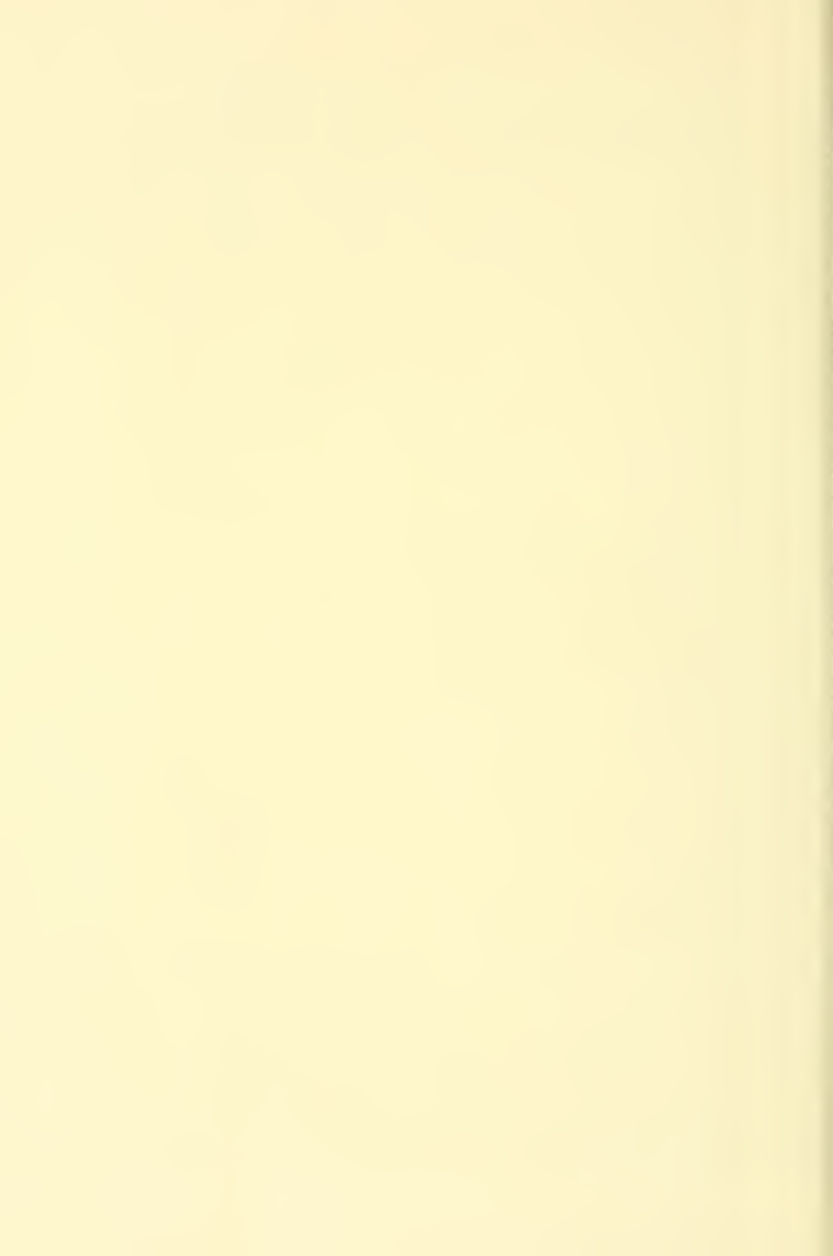
The first corn palace exposition opened on Monday evening, October 3, 1887. The whole city was in gala array for the jubilee. Illuminated arches spanned the intersections of the streets in the business district. Stores and houses were appropriately decorated. There was corn, corn everywhere, and in the midst of this festive display stood the corn palace — the pride of Sioux City and the marvel of all who beheld it.

Fantastically Moorish in general appearance, the first corn palace nevertheless possessed an individuality of architectural design peculiarly adapted to the purpose for which it was intended. At each front corner was a square tower representing Dakota, Nebraska, and Minnesota. Great arched entrances opened upon both Jackson and Fifth streets through smaller towers. Above each doorway was a panel in which agricultural scenes were portrayed in bas-relief, wrought with colored corn and other grains, while upon a platform at the top of each entrance tower was depicted an allegorical scene in figures.

The towers were connected by the battlemented walls of the edifice, above which rose graceful pinnacles, and beyond in the background was the corn-thatched roof — a solid mass of green. From the center of the roof towered the cupola, its arches and panels fashioned like those below and its spire rising to the height of a hundred feet. The long fly-



AN ARTIST'S SKETCH OF THE FIRST CORN PALACE—REPRODUCED FROM HARPER'S WEEKLY



ing buttresses which swept gracefully down from the four turrets of the cupola to the corner towers constituted the most conspicuous feature of the palace and, together with numerous openings and arches, they contributed an appearance of airiness and whimsicality quite in keeping with the ornate exterior. To the west the armory was decorated in the same manner as the corn palace proper, while beyond were two pavilions in towers corresponding to those of the principal building.

The entire outer surface was covered with corn and other grains. The fantastic lines of the superstructure were modified by a maze of detail and color. From spire to foundation every portion was covered with some decoration to please the eye and catch the imagination. Along the upper line of the front ran a shiny border of oats interspersed with the dark seed of the sorghum plant and flaming red corn. The numerous pinnacles were garbed in the rich colors of native grasses and crowned with tufts of millet and streaming banners. Born of the inspiration of a new idea, unique in design, and novel in material, the first corn palace in every line and detail seemed vocal with the significance of the great Northwest.

The space inside the palace beneath the cupola constituted a large auditorium the walls of which formed "one grand panorama of delightful imagery", rich with the beauty of nature's own painting. The bright colors of grain and grass and straw were

massed and blended in surprising brilliance and harmony. Yonder was a map of the United States made of seeds, each State of a different color; there a huge carrot spider was poised in a web of corn fibers; and most marvelous of all was the tableau of the golden stairs — a beautiful wax figure of Ceres, clad in a robe of satin husks and bearing a cornstalk scepter, stood upon a stairway of yellow corn.

After a week of street parades, fireworks, Indian war-dancing, speeches by notable people, band concerts, and competitive military drill the first corn palace was formally closed on Saturday, October the eighth. On the following Monday evening, however, as the climax of the jubilee, a big corn dance was held in the armory. The next day came a party of eastern capitalists, including Cornelius Vanderbilt and Chauncey Depew, to view the "eighth wonder of the world". Mr. Depew, who was prevailed upon to make a speech, declared that he had seen nearly all of the natural and unnatural wonders of the world, but never a corn palace before. "Any city so enterprising and so prolific in beautiful designs, and enthusiastic in all public enterprises must of necessity be the metropolis of the northwest", he said.

Early the next morning President Cleveland, who was on a tour of the country, arrived from St. Paul in his special train. At six o'clock the streets were crowded with people eager to catch a glimpse of the chief executive and his beautiful wife as they passed along to see the corn palace. Except for this spon-



taneous tribute there was no special demonstration and no formal reception. Within the corn palace the band played just as it had during the festival, while the presidential party inspected the displays of agricultural products and admired the unique decorations. Marveling at the prodigal resources of the Northwest, President Cleveland returned to his private car with a large ear of corn sticking out of his pocket and a new vision of its significance lingering in his mind. The corn palace, he remarked, was the first new thing he had seen on his trip.

Early in the summer of 1888 plans were begun for the second corn palace festival. During the weeks of preparation the local newspapers followed developments with exalted enthusiasm, the railroads were induced to announce half-fare rates to Sioux City, souvenirs were on sale by the first of September, arrangements were made for an elaborate program of entertainment, and long before the opening day on September 24th free passes were sent to Congressmen and other prominent people.

While the architecture of the second corn palace was of a composite order, it was less fantastic than the first had been. The building was square, covering a quarter of a block on the northeast corner of Pierce and Sixth streets. At the corners and midway along the sides facing the streets were towers projecting from the line of the wall and rising to a height of fifty feet.

Like the first corn palace the exterior of the sec-



ond was entirely covered with corn and other grains. It was estimated that thirty thousand bushels of corn were used — all that a section of land in northwest Iowa would normally produce. Ears of every color, sawed lengthwise into halves and transversely into sections, were nailed to the walls in intricate patterns and geometrical figures. Along the top of the wall ran a border of wheat sheaves, the upper portions of the towers were elaborately embellished, and the battlements were tufted with millet and sorghum seed. From the northwest to the southeast corners the color scheme of decoration was graduated to suggest the succession of seasons — the somber, neutral shades of winter gradually increasing in brightness, variety, and richness of combination until the full splendor of the autumnal tints appeared.

The whole interior of the palace was a wilderness of color. The booths around the walls in which produce was displayed were the units of decoration. One represented a Grecian temple and another a barnyard scene. A grotto presenting an illusion of ice and snow was “marvelously effective”.

Viewed from the promenade that encircled the vast amphitheater the maze of ornamental detail seemed unified by a band of golden-rod and millet separating the lower booths from the gallery. The supporting pillars, transformed with white corn into graceful columns of marble, carried the eye upward from the vividness and life below to a belt of invert-

ed wheat sheaves at the base of the dome-like roof. From there the glance was swept across the surface of the dome by the majestic grain-covered arches to the point where they met at the center. Unity and diversity, harmony and contrast concentrated their potencies in the vision. The mellow radiance of illumination added a glamour that accentuated the atmosphere of sentiment and romance which pervaded the place. "It suggests to me scenes of what fancy paints fairy land to be", declared Governor Larrabee.

The third corn palace was opened on Monday evening, September 23rd, with an address by J. M. Thurston, the "most gifted of western orators". During the first week a bicycle tournament was held and later several conventions met in Sioux City. Hundreds of Indians from the reservations attended the festival in their primitive garb, and entered wholeheartedly into the spirit of the jubilee. They were very conspicuous in the old settlers' parade, imparting the color of by-gone days to that pageant of progress. Not content with such a showing, however, they paraded daily by themselves. Another special attraction was a talking machine. Phonograph records were made and reproduced at the corn palace — to the anguish of the musicians.

Probably none of the corn palace festivals attracted more excursion parties than the one in 1889. During the first week a large delegation representing the Blue Grass League came in a special train

festooned with blue grass. From Omaha came another large excursion, and a "very quiet party" of deaf mutes from the School for the Deaf spent a day in Sioux City. But the most portentous event of the festival was the visit of a hundred New England capitalists who came on a special train all of the way from Boston. It is alleged that all expenses were paid by A. S. Garretson and that the capitalists were continually reminded that Sioux City was abundantly blessed with brains and possibilities but much in need of money.

The most distinctive feature of the third corn palace was a grand tower over one hundred and eighty feet high. It was built in four courses, each smaller than the one below, thus affording space for balconies from which the whole city could be seen. Flanking the main tower and connected with it by bridges were two smaller towers. The west end of the palace extended across Pierce Street in a great archway through which the traffic passed.

The corn palace of 1890 was described as a "Mohammedan mosque with Iowa trimming". The dome, built in the form of a huge globe, was decorated with corn to represent the world, with Iowa and Sioux City conspicuously indicated in front. On top of the world was a great table supporting an upper dome — a sort of Moslem turret two stories high. Three towers similarly crowned graced each of the two front sides.

As the visitor passed through the main entrance

at the corner of Pierce and Sixth streets the most striking feature of the interior met his gaze. Above the annex on the other side of the auditorium was a miniature valley of a great river — perhaps the Missouri. From far-distant mountains clothed in pine trees came a stream of water, leaping over rocks, hemmed in between high hills, winding across a prairie, and finally falling over a ledge into a lake below where the palmettos were growing.

Three times during the festival, which lasted from September 25th to October 11th, King Corn came forth in the costume of a knight of old, followed by a retinue of glittering attendants. The allegorical history of corn, the monarch of peace, was depicted by beautiful floats on which patriotic citizens, arrayed in the trappings of the sixth century, formed numerous tableaux. King Corn upon his throne and surrounded by ladies and pages dispensed princely favors as he passed along. Before the throne was a bronze urn filled with fruit and guarded by two gilded lions, on either side of the throne stood an antlered deer, while at the rear was a column upon which a cherub perched with a cornucopia filled with fruit and flowers.

The festival of 1890 was to have closed in splendor. The Governors and Congressmen from Iowa and neighboring States were invited to visit the corn palace. In the forenoon there was to have been a grand parade and in the afternoon an informal reception of the prominent guests. But nobody

came except Governor A. C. Mellette and Congressman I. S. Struble. It rained all day and the roof of the corn palace leaked. Late at night while the rain poured down in torrents and the lightning flashed on every side the electric lights were turned out and the doors of the fourth corn palace were closed.

The ardor of Sioux City seems not to have been dampened by the dismal end of the fourth corn palace festival. The following year another magnificent palace was built, the noblest of them all. More than a block long and dominated by a majestic dome over two hundred feet high — said to be the largest ever constructed of wood alone — the fifth corn palace was so well proportioned, so graceful in every line that the enormous bulk of the building was unperceived. Except for the two entrance towers the palace resembled the national capitol in general contour. There was the broad expanse of horizontal lines expressive of a vast domain: there was the splendid dome significant of lofty aspiration.

Fronting on Sixth Street, the palace was intersected in the center by an immense archway over Pierce Street. Above the arch was a spacious balcony bounded at each end by stately turrets which were flanked by minarets overlaid with wild sage and white corn, giving the appearance of a chased silver column divided into diamond sections by bars of ivory. The arch façade was covered with red corn in a manner to represent carved rock. Above and beyond the balcony was the open work of the lower



THE LAST CORN PALACE AT SIOUX CITY







reaches of the great central dome, draped in oats and converging below the broad blue frieze at the base of the upright portion of the dome. Upon this belt of blue a triumphal procession of domestic animals was portrayed with dark seeds and grasses. Above the frieze were minarets. Decorated with indigo corn at the base they passed through the shades of purple, red, orange, and yellow to dazzling white at the top. Between these minarets were the outlooks of the observation gallery adorned with lace-like fabric made of ropes of straw. The blue and gold capital of the dome supported a huge yellow cornucopia pouring forth the treasure of the fields.

"To be thoroughly appreciated," wrote a witness, "the Palace should be seen at sunset, when the solid mass of the building is cast in shade. Then each tower and turret and minaret shines in the warm light as if wrought of gold, like some magnificent dream of 'Spanish castles' discerned above the mist which fancy dares not penetrate."

The auditorium occupied the east wing of the palace while the west wing was devoted entirely to agricultural exhibits. In artistic detail and harmony of coloring the fifth corn palace surpassed all previous efforts. About the walls of the auditorium and in the balcony over the archway were numerous paintings and statues artfully constructed of grain. The designs were exceedingly intricate and the booths were the most elaborate that had ever been built in

the corn palace. A miniature library won the first prize. The walls of the library booth were adorned with pictures — a portrait of Dante, a winter scene, and a country maid with an apron of flowers. The floor was covered with a grass rug. Upon a table were quill pens of cane and oat straw, a corn lamp, a gourd inkwell, and several corn husk blotters.

Considerable space on the main floor of the west wing, which was decorated in Spanish moss and brake grass, was occupied by extensive southern exhibits. The exposition of produce from the Northwest was very complete. Several railroad companies vied with each other in displaying the resources of the country and presenting novel attractions.

The fifth and last corn palace was opened at noon of October 1, 1891, and remained on exhibition more than three weeks. Late in the evening of Sunday, October 25th, the final notes of "Farewell" had died away, the last stragglers had been ushered out, and only the long rows of chairs in the auditorium and the litter that strewed the floor told of the crowd that had assembled. The final footfall echoed drearily through the vast building as if the echo itself were oppressed at the thought that such a beautiful creation had been called into existence to be the center of a few days of festivity, only to be cast aside before the moon had waned. Then the doors of the Sioux City corn palace were closed forever.

JOHN ELY BRIGGS

## The Blue Grass Palace

The morning of August 21, 1890, dawned cool and cloudy, threatening rain. Hundreds of men and women of Creston, who had toiled for weeks to build and decorate the second blue grass palace, watched the sky anxiously. At about eight o'clock, however, the clouds cleared away, the sun shone forth brightly, and the promoters of the Blue Grass Palace Exposition and District Agricultural Fair rejoiced. The dedication that afternoon by Governor Horace Boies was not to be marred by the weather man.

The Blue Grass League of Southwestern Iowa, organized in the law office of J. B. Harsh at Creston on May 11, 1889, had sponsored the first attempt, during the summer of 'eighty-nine, to build a blue grass palace which would advertise southwestern Iowa as the corn palaces had heralded the advantages of Sioux City. The enterprise had met with flattering success and, encouraged by the results, the league had planned the wonder palace for 1890, where the eighteen counties of the league would exhibit the products of the soil and join in a carnival holiday after the harvest was ended and summer was merging into autumn.

The second blue grass palace, a building three times the size of the first palace, was erected on the Creston fair grounds. Facing the race track on the

east the structure extended north and south almost the length of a city block and was fully half as wide. Its conical shaped central tower reached a height of one hundred and twenty feet, while on both the north and south wings were cupolas ninety feet high. A square, five-story tower forming the central part of the main entrance supported a flagstaff from which a banner bearing the legend, "Creston Blue Grass Palace", floated in the breeze a hundred feet above the ground. From the flagstaffs on the two cupolas, the towering central dome, the four smaller towers, and the two turrets, the Stars and Stripes were unfurled. Multicolored pennons were placed at regular intervals along the upper promenade which encircled both the north and south wings. A broad suspension bridge stretched from the central dome to the cupolas, affording an unobstructed view of Union County farms that swept away to the horizon. The entire surface of the palace was covered with heavy layers of long stemmed blue grass, timothy, clover, and straw arranged in designs and effects highly artistic.

At an early hour on the morning of the opening day the fair ground presented a lively scene. The owners of shows, refreshment booths, lemonade stands, and shooting galleries were setting up for business, fakirs were erecting their tents, and wagon loads of exhibits awaited their turn for unloading. Inside the palace workmen were hastening to complete the huge auditorium for the reception of the

Governor. The stage was carpeted and profusely decorated with flowers and plants. South of the stage stretched a large painting by a local artist which featured a picture of the palace with little angels filling the sky, each equipped with a banner bearing the name of one of the counties of the league. The angel with the Union County banner perched on the center spire of the palace.

The crowd began to arrive shortly after noon and by two-thirty the huge auditorium was packed by an audience of three or four thousand people. Hundreds, unable to squeeze their way into the auditorium, had to be content with wandering along the promenades, visiting the suspension bridge, or inspecting the exhibits. Meanwhile the famous Iowa State Band which had accompanied the Governor from Des Moines entertained the waiting crowd with classical and popular music.

A few minutes after three o'clock the watchers on the suspension bridge saw the procession approaching from town. In the van rode the Governor and his staff followed by the mayor of Creston and the city council. Next came the Creston fire department in uniform while local citizens and visitors in hacks, carriages, and buggies brought up the rear. As the official party entered the auditorium the band blared forth with the stirring march, "Hail to the Chief", and the crowd greeted the first citizen of the State with loud applause and noisy cheering. In his address Governor Boies lauded the members and pro-

moters of the Blue Grass League and expressed his surprise and delight at the beautiful structure which he had the honor to dedicate. He concluded his address with remarks on the political situation, urging that every citizen should know the principles upon which his government is founded and should study carefully the issues of the day. A hand-shaking reception followed the program of the afternoon, and the first day of the exposition ended with the large crowd very hot but exceedingly happy.

The second day of the exposition, which had been set apart in honor of Taylor and Adair counties, was perhaps of equal interest. Honorable Roger Q. Mills, of Texas, author of the Mills Tariff Bill, had been selected as the orator of the day, and he had arrived in time to attend the dedicatory exercises on the previous afternoon. Early in the morning of August 22nd the roads leading into Creston were black with buggies, carriages, and wagons bringing the country folk from far and near. At nine o'clock two special trains arrived on the north branch, carrying the Fontanelle band and a large crowd from Adair County. Half an hour later two special trains from the south brought the Taylor County delegation accompanied by the New Market band of nine pieces, the Conway band of twelve, the Lenox band of ten, and the Fifth Regimental Band of Bedford — one of the prize musical organizations of the State. At ten o'clock the blue grass palace special from Omaha, elaborately decorated with flags, bunt-



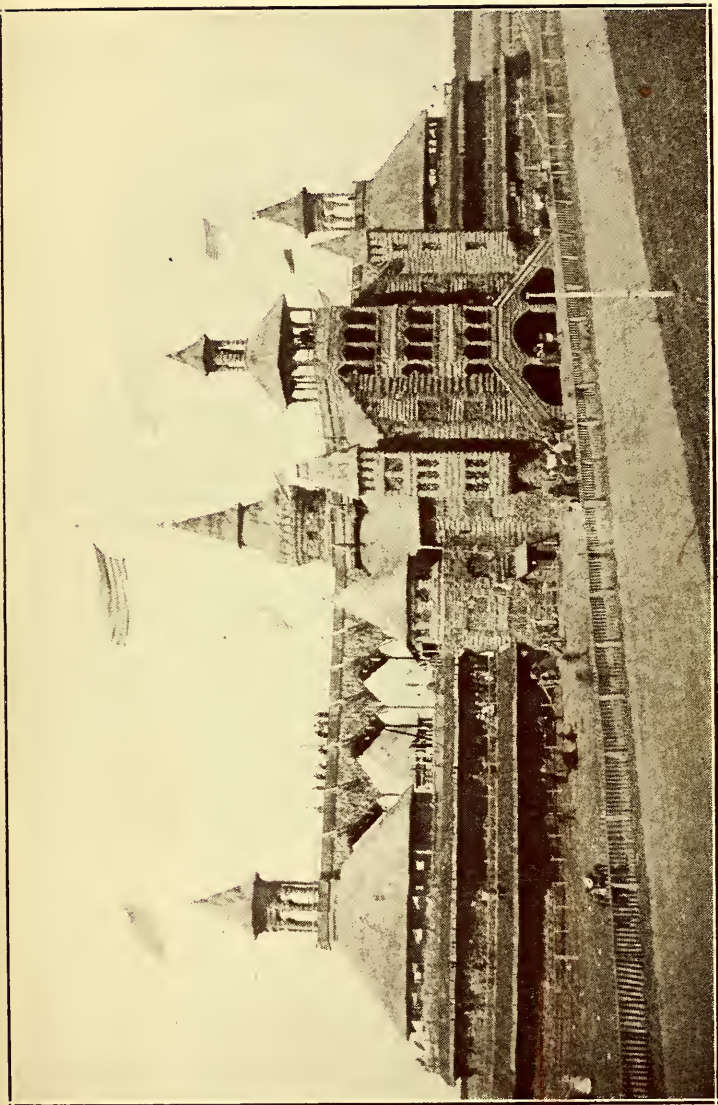
ing, and banners, rolled into the station yard, loaded with visitors and a big band from the Nebraska metropolis. The different delegations formed in line headed by the Nebraska group, and with bands playing martial music, flags flying, and banners waving they marched north to the palace grounds.

The crowd surged back and forth through the palace admiring the artistic decorations and the displays of agricultural products. Interest centered, however, about the apartments occupied by the two counties to which the second day of the exposition had been dedicated. The ceiling and the three walls of the Adair County booth were completely covered with corn, oats, grasses, and wheat arranged in novel patterns. A large, square centerpiece covered with all the varieties of grasses grown in the county served as a base on which a horse and sleigh made of the products of the soil caught the attention of the visitors. A straw man with a mustache of red corn silk sat in the sleigh driving a corn horse with plaited blue grass reins and harness. At one side of the booth a miniature replica of a Fontanelle elevator covered with red shelled corn held a supply of grain and grass seed which poured through little spouts into tiny box cars on the railroad track. A Newfoundland dog and a horse, both life size and constructed of blue grass, and a sheep made of oat and wheat heads occupied prominent places in the display. Samples of brick from a Fontanelle kiln, firkins of rich butter, and cheese, vegetables, grains,



and fruits were arranged in attractive fashion, the whole effect being a worthy tribute to the taste of the committee in charge of the Adair County offering.

The Taylor County display also delighted the thousands who visited the booth. Suspended from the elaborately decorated ceiling a large wooden egg, thirty-three inches long and thirteen inches in diameter, called attention to the poultry business of the county. On the egg sat perched a small bantam hen and below it hung a card with the notice: "Hens laid 532,540 dozen eggs, worth 12c per dozen, or \$63,904.80." The center piece of this booth was a miniature residence of Queen Anne style, set in a lawn of close-cropped blue grass sprayed by numerous fountains. Gravel walks, bordered with flowers, extended around the house and across the lawn. Back of the house lay a lake with its banks embowered with flowers. The sunlight on the fountains, the velvety green of the lawn, the white walks, and the little house perfect in detail made one of the most charming pictures in the palace. The side walls of the booth were completely covered with pictures made of seeds, clover heads, corn husks, and ears of corn. One was a life-size horse constructed entirely of red clover heads, another of seeds and grain represented a Holstein cow, while a third was a sheep made of oats and wheat. Pyramids of fruit and vegetables, tubs of butter, shelves full of glasses of jelly, preserves, and canned apples,



THE SECOND BLUE GRASS PALACE



pears, peaches, plums, and berries completed a display to which the judges awarded second prize at the close of the exposition.

Fremont County captured the first prize of \$100 offered by the Blue Grass League to the county making the best display. It was a center of attention throughout the exposition. Like most of the booths the ceiling was covered with cornstalks, wheat, and oats, and the side walls were hidden completely by a covering of grains and grasses, but the arrangement of the Fremont exhibit was unique and unusually attractive. Long tables in rows down the center of the apartment were covered with white linen and held china plates piled high with apples, plums, peaches, pears, grapes, and berries. Beneath the tables cabbages, potatoes, carrots, beets, pumpkins, cauliflower, squashes, melons, tomatoes, celery, and egg plants were piled in heaps. Around the walls stood sacks with open tops displaying shelled corn, oats, wheat, barley, rye, millet, flax, broom corn, timothy, clover, and blue grass seed, while corn was also shown in the stalk and wheat and oats in bundles. Butter and cheese exhibits occupied a large space. One entire side of the apartment was filled with a fine arts exhibit — paintings and drawings in crayon, oil, water colors, and pastel — all the work of Tabor College students. Another student at that institution had arranged a display of seventy-six varieties of wood, all native of the county. A parlor with rustic furniture, constructed

from the products of the farm, was also a conspicuous feature of the Fremont prize-winning booth.

On Monday the twenty-fifth, the district fair began and with the racing program, the carnival gaiety, and the live stock exhibit it afforded the crowds new thrills and a revival of old delights. The thousands who surged back and forth from grandstand and amphitheater to the blue grass palace, from the quarter-stretch to the live stock barns reflected the Iowan's delight at a country fair. The showing of fat hogs, of fine sleek cattle, and of pedigreed horses taxed the capacity of the barns and sheds. The racing stables were also full. Grooms in old sweaters and dusty clothing discussed the races of the day with diminutive jockeys clad in the gay colors of their calling. The spielers of the side shows found a receptive audience, while the lemonade stands and refreshment booths did a rushing business. Fakirs, too, plied their trade and the carnival spirit reigned.

The fame of the blue grass palace spread. Ottumwa sent a delegation to Creston and Sioux City did likewise. The railroads advertised round-trip excursions for one-way fare and ran special trains daily to accommodate the visitors. Although no automobiles existed it was not uncommon for parties to drive to the fair from a distance of thirty miles or more, and stay two or three days. Creston hotels and restaurants reaped a golden harvest and the hackmen prospered. The unusual and distinctive

features of the displays were described in the newspapers throughout the State. Different counties of the Blue Grass League had charge of the programs on successive days, each striving in friendly rivalry to make the best showing. As a means of broadcasting the natural advantages of the fertile acres of southwestern Iowa, as a test of the ability of the people of this region to coöperate in a big enterprise, as a financial undertaking, and as a method of combining carnival fun with an educational program the Blue Grass Palace Exposition of 1890 was a complete success.

The following year and again in 1892 blue grass palaces advertised southwestern Iowa. Lyman Abbot of New York and W. C. P. Breckenridge of Kentucky were two of the speakers who came to mold opinion on topics of the day. Although of the same size and shape as the palace of 1890 alterations changed the appearance of the entrance in 1891 and made access to the suspension bridge more convenient. Probably the most striking feature of the third palace was a huge movable panorama composed of paintings depicting actual scenes from the blue grass region. In 1892 the outside of the palace building was painted to represent the stone walls of an old castle, the towers were painted to resemble brick, and the roof again was thatched. But the Blue Grass League had passed out of existence, and by this time the novelty of the palace idea had worn off so that the project was abandoned thereafter.

BRUCE E. MAHAN



## The Ottumwa Coal Palace

Great things often spring from small beginnings. So it was with the Ottumwa coal palace. Some-time late in the year of 1889 three of Ottumwa's most prominent citizens—Henry Phillips, Calvin Manning, and Peter G. Ballingall—met to consider the advisability of erecting a coal palace to proclaim to the world the rich gifts of nature in southern Iowa. Interest in the project spread and other meetings were held. A company was organized and stock was sold at five dollars a share. As time passed, however, it became more and more difficult to raise sufficient money. People were perfectly willing to have a coal palace built but seemed unprepared to supply the funds for such an expensive venture.

At last the zero hour arrived. The promoters realized that the money must be secured at once or the whole scheme abandoned. A mass meeting was called. Several of the business men of Ottumwa urged the people to double their stock in the company but few responded. The coal palace project seemed to be doomed. Suddenly Mr. Ballingall appeared on the stage. Voicing his enthusiasm in a loud tone accompanied by frantic gestures and increasing his own subscription to seven hundred dollars, he succeeded in reviving the optimism of the



assembly. One man bought two hundred shares in the coal palace, and before the meeting ended over thirty thousand dollars had been promised.

The summer of 1890 was a busy one in Ottumwa. While the coal palace was being erected elaborate plans were made for the exposition. All of the counties in the coal-mining district of Iowa were invited to display their wares in the palace and many prominent men were invited to come to Ottumwa during the festival season.

The morning of the opening day of the palace, September 16, 1890, dawned cool and cloudy, but about nine o'clock the clouds cleared away and when Governor Horace Boies arrived later in the forenoon the sun was shining brightly. At one-thirty a long procession, headed by the Iowa State Band, the Governor, the directors of the coal palace, city officials, and a company of militia, formed on Main Street and marched west to the great black diamond palace near the Burlington passenger station.

There in the Sunken Park, which had once been the bed of the Des Moines River before the railroad had turned the stream from its course, was an imposing structure. Fully two hundred and thirty feet in length, more than half as wide, the central tower rising to the height of two hundred feet, the high battlemented walls, the numerous turrets, and the tall narrow windows — all contributed to an appearance of mediaeval feudalism. The somber aspect of the frowning castle was intensified by the glittering

jet of the coal which veneered the walls. In architectural style the building was a combination of the Gothic and Byzantine orders.

Directly above the main entrance were the words "Coal Palace" formed with coal that glistened in the sunlight and stood out clearly against a silver-gray background. High on the tower above were two pictures, one portraying conditions in the carboniferous age and the other a modern coal mine, while between them stood a miner with his pick raised in the act of striking. Across the front of the building on either side of the entrance tower the first story projected from the line of the upper wall, forming a balcony. Just below the battlements of this balcony ran a broad frieze upon which were designs representing the industries of Ottumwa. The turrets at the four corners of the great central tower were veneered with cubes of coal laid so as to expose three sides and reflect the light from the different faces. In the tower itself, one hundred and fifty feet above the ground, was an observation gallery and dancing pavilion.

Viewed from the outside the coal palace was more imposing than artistic, but within grace and beauty reigned. The pillars, walls, rafters, and ceiling were completely hidden by the exhibits and exquisite decorations. Corn, oats, wheat, rye, barley, millet, blue grass, timothy, clover, and flax were skillfully arranged in brilliant masses of color. Around the walls of the palace were beautiful panels containing

pictures in corn symbolical of agriculture, industry, mechanics, music, art, literature, geography, and commerce.

Directly opposite the main entrance was a cascade so cleverly constructed that the line of demarcation between the banks of the stream and the painted valley could not be discerned. Miniature crags and boulders jutted out of the water, trees were growing in the valley, a suspension bridge spanned the abyss, and calcium lights from behind threw a rainbow into the falls. Immediately in front of the cataract was a spacious platform on which notable men, famous bands, the coal palace chorus, old Powhatan and his dusky braves, or the Mikado with his retinue claimed attention every evening.

Except for the space occupied by the auditorium the lower floor and the spacious gallery were entirely devoted to the display of agricultural, mineral, and mechanical products. The counties of the coal palace region vied with each other to produce the most pleasing exhibit; the Blue Grass League sent a splendid display; two meat packing plants were represented by booths; and the Northern Pacific Railroad was advertised by the most magnificent showing of all.

No doubt the most unique attraction at the coal palace was the miniature mine. Entering the dark, coal-lined shaft from the gallery the visitor was lowered slowly to the labyrinthine recesses beneath the palace. There a meek and noncommittal mule

hitched to a train of pit cars waited for his load of passengers. The entries, rooms, and tracks were complete in every detail, rich veins of coal were visible, and several miners were at work with pick and drill producing "concentrated heat, light, and power". To the thousands of people who took the "mine route" in the coal palace this demonstration was a revelation.

During the coal palace season, which lasted from September 16th to October 11th, nearly every day was set apart in honor of some organization, county, or State. Governor Boies dedicated the palace on Iowa day. Missouri day was September 26th; the twenty-ninth was Cedar Rapids day; Des Moines day came on the first of October; one day the railroads commanded attention; the traveling men, old soldiers, miners, and ladies each had a day of their own; and every coal-mining county surrounding Ottumwa and the blue grass region of southwestern Iowa took turns at flaunting their merits during the festival.

The climax of attractions was reached on the ninth of October when President Benjamin Harrison spent a day in Ottumwa. It was raining steadily at eight o'clock when the presidential train pulled into the station and few people were present to greet the chief executive. He was met by his brother, John S. Harrison of Kansas City, and taken immediately to the home of his sister, Mrs. D. T. Devin, where breakfast was served. The rain was still falling at

THE OTTUMWA COAL PALACE







ten o'clock when the President went to explore the coal palace, but at noon the clouds dispersed and at one o'clock the presidential party reviewed the grand parade.

That afternoon an enormous crowd jammed into the coal palace to hear Mr. Harrison speak. The President declared that he was particularly interested to see the things of beauty that had been made of familiar materials. "If I should attempt to interpret the lesson of this structure", he said, "I should say that it was an illustration of how much that is artistic and graceful is to be found in the common things of life and if I should make an application of the lesson it would be to suggest that we might profitably carry into all our homes and into all neighborly intercourse the same transforming spirit".

At this juncture the cascade was turned on and the rush of water completely drowned the President's voice. Perfectly at ease when contending with a brass band, he had never before been asked to speak in the roar of Niagara. "I had supposed", he said when the waterfall had been stopped, "that no political suggestion of any sort was to be introduced into this friendly concourse of American citizens", and he felt that he had "good cause for grievance against the prohibitionists for interrupting us with this argument for cold water."

Mr. Harrison dined at the home of W. D. Felton, an old friend and former resident of Indianapolis. In the evening nearly ten thousand people crowded



into the coal palace for the privilege of shaking hands with the President. It was nearly nine o'clock when the reception ended and a few minutes later the special train pulled out for St. Joseph, Missouri.

For more than a year the coal palace stood as a monument to the enterprise of the citizens of Ottumwa. It was readorned and opened again in connection with the festival in 1891 which was not as successful as the first had been. Though the exposition was attractive, the waterfall was improved, and the mine continued to operate, enthusiasm for the project seemed to have subsided. Neither General Russell A. Alger, Governor Horace Boies, nor Representative William McKinley drew the crowds that had visited the first coal palace. The structure was later torn down and the Ottumwa coal palace passed into history.

CARL B. KREINER

## Comment by the Editor

### THE BEAUTY THAT WAS IOWA

Art is universal. Every people of every land in every age have felt the urge to express themselves in terms of beauty. Emotions, aspirations, ideas, and achievements have been idealized in poetry, music, painting, sculpture, and buildings. The "frozen music" of architecture with its harmony and balance of line, its facilities for ornamentation, its endurance, and its combination of utility and grace is particularly adapted to the portrayal of human character.

What could be more symbolical in Iowa art than the palaces that sprang from the soil? Nor were the corn palaces, the coal palace, and the blue grass palaces the only ones that were built. Mason City had a flax palace; Algona erected a hay palace; and Davenport talked of an onion palace. Perhaps the St. Paul ice palace or the crystal palace of London inspired the idea; but nowhere before had the conception been so completely expressive of purpose, so inherently meaningful. The Iowa palaces served as significant memorials of substantial achievement, erected by a grateful, joyous, and prosperous people who lived in a land of plenty.

### THE TWENTY-FIFTH OF APRIL

As the Ides of March was a tragic day in ancient Rome, so the twenty-fifth of April will be long re-

membered in Sioux City. At one o'clock on that fatal day in 1893 D. T. Hedges, the wealthiest man in the city, assigned all his property to his creditors. Ten minutes later the Union Loan and Trust Company failed, and with it the financial foundation of Sioux City crumbled.

For a decade money had poured into the city, big industries had been founded, and the astonishing results had been heralded widely. Then the achievement of years was undone in a flash. Within an hour the owners of the union stock yards, one of the packing plants, two railroads, and the Sioux City terminal were bankrupt. The amazing growth of the "Metropolis of the Northwest", to which the famous corn palaces had contributed much, was a thing of the past, and the roseate hopes of the future were transformed into the substance of dreams.

J. E. B.

# The **PALIMPSEST**

NOVEMBER 1922

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THE EDITOR

**PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT IOWA CITY BY  
THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA**

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

The PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

*Superintendent*

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## THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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PRICE—10c per copy: \$1 per year: free to members of Society

ADDRESS—The State Historical Society Iowa City Iowa

# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN ELY BRIGGS

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VOL. III

ISSUED IN NOVEMBER 1922

NO. 11

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## That 1900 Football Team

The football season of 1899 had been a splendid success for the State University of Iowa. A fast, powerful, well-coached team had gone through a series of ten games without a single defeat. No opponent had crossed the Iowa goal line—a distinction which not another university team in the whole country could claim. Only five points had been scored against that Iowa eleven—the result of a place kick by Chicago against whom Iowa made a touchdown for an equal number of points. Later Chicago defeated Cornell University and outplayed Pennsylvania in a tie game. Victories by the University over Ames and Grinnell had established a clear title to the championship of the State, and after Nebraska had been decisively eliminated by a score of 30 to 0 and Illinois overwhelmed on Thanksgiving Day 58 to 0 (this game was ended by mutual consent ten minutes before the time was up), it was

the general consensus of opinion that the Iowa football team of 1899 was the best in the West if not also the equal of any in the East. At the close of the season Iowa had been admitted to the Intercollegiate Conference, popularly known thereafter as the "Big Nine".

So when the University opened in the fall of 1900 hope ran high for even more glorious achievements on the gridiron. Dr. A. A. Knipe, captain of the Pennsylvania championship eleven of 1894, was entering upon his third season as football coach at Iowa. All but two of the famous team of '99 were back in school, and at least seven of them had had two years of training in the "Pennsylvania system".

John G. Griffith, better known as "Reddy", was captain, playing his fourth year of varsity football. Though one of the smallest men on the team his ability to gain ground qualified him for the position of full back. At quarter back was Clyde Williams, a brilliant field general, accurate in passing the ball, and a marvel at returning punts. Ray A. Morton, the fastest man on the squad and former Shelby high school team mate with Williams, was ready for his third year at right half back. W. C. Edson, who had begun his college football career at Ames and played left half back on the University team the preceding year, conspicuous for his quick judgment and his stiff, leather-cased hand, was out for his old position. The captain of the famous team of '99,



Morey L. Eby, star end and tackle during three seasons, could be depended upon for almost any line or back field berth, while Bert Watters, the aggressive, sure-tackling right end, was ready to compete with all comers for his old position. Joseph S. Warner, over six feet in height, had played two years at left tackle and had developed into the best kicker on the team. At the other tackle position was Emmet F. Burrier, a powerful defensive player and just the man to head a tackle-back play. He had been shifted from his former left guard position of two seasons to make a place for Ernest H. Little, one of the biggest men on the squad but new to the game. James M. Brockway gave promise of being the same dashing right guard he had been in 1899. The position of "center rush" was the only real vacancy on the team. M. E. Baker, who had held the place two years, was not in school; and C. O. Briggs was scarcely in a class with the rest of the team either in experience or ability. Before the season opened, however, Asher W. Ely, a six footer, twenty-eight years old, bald-headed, and weighing over two hundred and twenty-five pounds, was induced to don the moleskins and filled the gap with entire satisfaction.

Three weeks before the University opened a dozen or more candidates for the team went into training at Linder's boathouse on the Iowa River two miles north of Iowa City. Living in the open; learning anew the fundamentals of tackling, kicking, block-

ing, passing the ball, and running interference; spending leisure hours fishing, rowing, and swimming; and devouring enormous quantities of the excellent food prepared by Mrs. Linder, the squad was in splendid condition for the first game on September 28th.

The season opened auspiciously when Upper Iowa was defeated by a score of 57 to 0 in a muddy game. A drizzling rain which converted the newly graded gridiron into a sea of mud absorbed most of the snap and enthusiasm that had characterized the Iowa team of the previous year. The only display of speed occurred during the first minute of play. After Captain Griffith had returned the kick-off twelve yards and Brockway had plowed through the line for three more, left tackle Warner circled the end on a fake play and ran seventy-five yards for a touchdown. But the ball soon became so slippery that fumbles were frequent, while the weight of mud-soaked uniforms and the recurrence of long runs were very exhausting. The game proved nothing as to the ability of the team.

Recalling the defeat administered by the State Normal team two years before, the friends of the Iowa team awaited with considerable misgiving the second game on the schedule. It was reported that while the Normal team was green, it had shown remarkable development under the tutelage of Fred A. Williams, a former Iowa star. The University eleven on the contrary seemed to lack teamwork and

its reputed speed. After the first five minutes of play, however, all doubt of the superiority of Knipe's men vanished. The first half, replete with fumbles and long end runs, ended with a score of 40 to 0 and during the second session, played in a pouring rain, the University team—composed mostly of substitutes—added twenty-eight points more.

Thus far the defensive strength of the Iowa eleven had not been tested, but rumors came from Indianola that Simpson, the next opponent on the schedule, had a powerful team coached in the Pennsylvania style of play and fired with an ambition to spoil the Iowa record of an uncrossed goal line. The fact that two members of the team were brothers of Kennedy, captain of the Chicago team of '99, added color to the reports.

For a few minutes after the game began it appeared that the Hawkeyes had met their match. Simpson kicked off to the three yard line and Edson returned ten yards. Two line smashes failed to gain and Captain Griffith, almost in the shadow of his own goal posts, was forced to kick. From the forty yard line the Simpson players advanced steadily down the field until they made first down inside the Iowa five yard line. Twice the Simpson tackles were called back and bucked the line with all their might. The coveted goal was less than a yard away when they lined up for their final effort. But the Old Gold warriors held, Warner punted, and the

crisis was past. A few minutes later Simpson kicked from the forty yard line and Williams, with splendid interference, returned to the former line of scrimmage. A series of smashes gained twenty-five yards and Watters added thirty-five around the end. Three more plays and the score was 5 to 0 for Iowa.

The remainder of the game was an exhibition of sensational open field running and brilliant tackling on the part of the Iowa team. Twice Edson wriggled loose from a bunch of tacklers and ran for a touchdown — once a distance of forty yards and later sixty. One play in particular brought the spectators to their feet in admiration: Williams caught a punt and carried the ball sixty-five yards through the entire Simpson team for the final touchdown of the game. Only two circumstances dampened Iowa enthusiasm: fumbles were altogether too numerous and Captain Griffith was compelled to leave the game with a sprained knee — an injury that kept him on the side lines most of the remainder of the season.

The score of 47 to 0 over Simpson, while it indicated some brilliant offensive work, was no measure of defensive strength. A game with Ames, scheduled for October 19th, had to be cancelled on account of an epidemic of typhoid fever among members of the Ames squad, which left Iowa with no further preparation for the Drake game on October 26th. While the Hawkeyes were idle Drake held the strong Nebraska team to a score of 8 to 0. The Des Moines team had previously defeated Grinnell 6 to 0 and



THE IOWA FOOTBALL TEAM OF 1900





piled up fifty-one points against State Normal. A train load of rooters accompanied the team to Iowa City, determined that the Iowa goal line should be crossed and the championship of the State decided in favor of Drake. The railroads offered excursion rates and Iowa City was filled to overflowing.

During the first half the outlook was gloomy for the Hawkeye following. Both teams presented a stonewall defense. Time and again Iowa carried the ball within the twenty yard line only to lose it on a fumble. Once when the Drake quarter back dropped a punt Eby recovered near the goal, but Drake held within her three yard line and kicked out of danger. Just before the end of the first half Warner scored five points with a field goal by place kick. During the second period Iowa's weight and interference began to tell and four touchdowns were scored. At one time Drake stopped the Iowa march on her one yard line but later a Drake punt from the same position was blocked, Iowa recovered, and one plunge by Eby — who was playing full back in place of Captain Griffith — was sufficient to score.

The crucial test for the Old Gold team of 1900 came on November 3rd when they met the Chicago Maroons on Marshall Field. It was reported that Coach Stagg's protégés had a wholesome respect for the "corn fed" boys who had come out of the West the previous autumn and rushed them off their feet. While Chicago had been unable to stop the famous Pennsylvania "guards-back" play the pre-



vious week in Philadelphia, they were confident that the Iowa guards were not as formidable as those of the mother institution. At the same time optimism prevailed in the Hawkeye camp. Competent observers of the Drake game had been impressed with the great variety of the Iowa plays. In truth the Iowa team had a reputation for employing unique formations and being coached to take advantage of all the opportunities the rules afforded. The hot weather was blamed for the fumbling and loose offensive play.

Both teams were given splendid ovations when they came on the field at 2:30 o'clock. Fully six thousand cheering spectators filled the bleachers. The Chicago captain won the toss and chose to defend the south goal with the wind at his back. Iowa kicked off to the five yard line and the game was on. The Hawkeyes began with a cautious type of play which kept them on the defensive, punting whenever there was danger of being held for downs. Nearly ten minutes had elapsed before either team made an earnest attempt to score. Then Iowa took the ball on Chicago's forty-five yard line and, calling the guards-back and tackles-back plays into service, began to plow down the field. The heavy Hawkeye "rushes" plunged into the Maroon line for one, two, and three yard gains. Steadily foot by foot Chicago was forced to retreat. Again and again the referee yelled "First down, five yards to gain!" On the side lines the Iowa crowd cheered fran-

tically: "He-rah, hi-rah. Play ball, Iowa". Within fifteen yards of the goal the Maroon defense stiffened, Chicago kicked out of danger, and Iowa resumed the defensive.

Now came the Chicago rooters' chance to cheer. Taking the pigskin on their thirty yard line Stagg's men launched their one great drive for Iowa's uncrossed goal line. The first play gained eleven yards around end and was followed by a series of center smashes that were good for two first downs. A penalty against the Hawkeyes and a ten yard run netted twenty yards more. Then followed short gains interspersed with losses until Chicago was in position to try for a field goal. Twice within a few minutes Henry of Chicago attempted place kicks but both times the ball went wide. The tide seemed to have turned when Captain Griffith picked up a fumble and broke away for fifteen yards, but enthusiasm turned to gloom a moment later when the doughty captain had to be carried from the field, seriously injured. On an exchange of punts Chicago fumbled, Iowa recovered on the thirteen yard line, and hope once more revived. Here was a golden opportunity and the Iowans hit the Chicago line with every ounce of energy they could muster. At the critical point, however, they became a little too anxious, a trifle self-conscious, and the result was a fumble on the Chicago eight yard line. And so the first half ended — Chicago 0, Iowa 0.

The second half is a different story. The Iowa

team came upon the field fresh, enthusiastic, and determined, while the Maroons appeared tired, and dispirited, their confidence shattered. From the very beginning the fates were all with Iowa. Little caught the kick-off on the twenty-five yard line and returned it twenty yards. Eby, who had replaced Griffith at full back, made ten yards in two downs. After an exchange of punts, Iowa took the ball in the middle of the field and settled down to steady, smashing play. The powerful tandem formations of guards-back and tackles-back pierced the weary Maroon line for consistent gains. When the secondary defense came in too close Williams would send his flying interference around the ends with bewildering speed. It was on such a play that Edson made a brilliant fifteen yard run. Once Chicago recovered the ball but lost it a moment later on a fumble and the Hawkeye offensive was resumed. At six minutes to four Eby went over the goal for a touchdown and pandemonium broke loose among the Iowans. Over the telephone in Iowa City the Hawkeye battle cry could be heard distinctly: "Haw-haw-haw, hi-hi-hi, Hawkeye-Hawkeye, S. U. I."

Combining clock-like precision with splendid football strategy and brilliant execution, only five minutes were required for the Iowa team to send Edson across for the second touchdown. The remainder of the game was a kicking duel with all the advantage in favor of Warner. When the ball had been advanced within twenty-five yards of the Chicago goal

he substituted a place kick for a punt and added the final five points to the score. Probably the greatest thrill of the game came on the last play before time was called when Edson ran thirty-five yards to the Chicago four yard line.

Iowa had won decisively. Those who saw the game were extravagant in their praise of the westerners. The Chicago newspapers united in the opinion that the best team had won. More than that — the Iowans apparently possessed all of the qualifications of a championship team. To be sure the championship had not yet been decided but the showing at Chicago and the record of an uncrossed goal line were strong presumptions in favor of Iowa. The Old Gold eleven had met its first severe trial and had emerged victorious: only two more obstacles — Michigan and Northwestern — remained to be surmounted. Michigan could always be depended upon as a formidable antagonist. Already the Wolverines had ruined the hopes of three conference teams — Purdue, Illinois, and Indiana — and they had no intention of allowing Iowa to interrupt their series of victories.

Following the Chicago game the Hawkeye squad went into camp at Mt. Clemens near Detroit, where the men were taught an entirely new set of plays. That the team used a repertory of at least seventy-five formations and plays is a significant commentary upon the mentality of the men who composed it and the versatility of their game. Only the most

exact teamwork and wholehearted loyalty on the part of each man toward his fellows could make such a system successful.

By two o'clock on November 10th Bennett Park in Detroit began to fill with thousands of people who braved the raw, inclement weather to see the game that would probably decide the football championship of the West. The bleachers seemed aglow with chrysanthemums, and the Maize and Blue of Michigan was everywhere. With a strong wind at their backs and a sleet storm in the faces of their opponents, the Wolverines decided upon the strategy of a punting game. After the kick-off the teams lined up quickly, and Sweeley, star Michigan kicker, dropped back for a punt inside his five yard line. The Hawkeye rushes tore through the Wolverine line so fast that Sweeley barely had time to recover a bad pass from center. Once more he attempted to punt, but the pass was too high and an Iowan pounced on the ball. With indomitable determination to make the most of their advantage the aggressive Hawkeyes pushed Eby over for the first touchdown. Not quite two minutes had elapsed since the game began.

But the game was not yet won. Twice within the next few minutes the Wolverines, fighting grimly to turn the tide, advanced well into Iowa territory and twice Sweeley tried for a field goal. Each time he failed. Warner punted to the center of the field and Michigan — still placing her faith in the strong

right foot of the redoubtable Sweeley, and a favorable wind — was more than willing to accept a punting duel. The only flaw in their plan of attack was a failure to reckon with Williams. Catching the ball, he eluded the fast Michigan ends and sped down the field, dodging, hurdling, and sidestepping the tacklers who closed in on every side. Not until he had put nearly half the length of the field behind him was he brought to a stop. Springing into their positions, the Hawkeyes executed a series of end runs, double passes, and line smashes that completely bewildered the Michiganders who had been taught to stop only the guards-back play. Every scrimmage was a surprise. The Iowans played with the dash and confidence that comes from perfect teamwork and an unbroken line of victories. It was a beautiful exhibition of fast, clever football and resulted in another touchdown by Eby. The five or six thousand spectators, most of them Michigan students and residents of Detroit, could not restrain exclamations of admiration. Before the close of the period Iowa got possession of the ball near the middle of the field and by good generalship, hard plunging, and irresistible interference swept down the field for the third touchdown. And so the first half ended — Iowa 17, Michigan 0.

During the second half the Michigan defense stiffened, but Iowa changed tactics and began hammering at the Wolverine forwards who were already showing signs of fatigue. Steady line bucking grad-



ually broke down the determined resistance. Warner, Burrier, Morton, and Williams repeatedly plowed through for long gains. Edson scored the fourth touchdown and three minutes later Morton made a sensational fifty yard run to the Michigan fifteen yard line. Again his number was called. Tearing around left end, he dodged through four tacklers and made for the corner of the field. Along the goal line raced full back Sweeley. Both men hurled themselves forward with all their force as they met on the one yard line. Morton was lifted bodily into the air. Standing on his head he flung his feet over and jerked across for a touchdown. To kick a goal from such an angle seemed impossible. Down went the ball on the side line, out shot Warner's foot, and true as a die the pigskin flew between the posts. It was a wonderful kick.

Michigan no longer fought to win, but to score against the western invincibles. Clinching their teeth the Wolverines sent their backs into the line like battering rams. Fresh men were sent in when any weakened. Yard by yard they worked the ball down the field. But the Hawkeyes fought doggedly. Spectators marveled at their physical endurance, for not a substitution was made during the entire game. Finally the Michigan drive was halted and Warner punted. Watters, racing down the field, blind to the Michigan man's signal for a fair catch, tackled low and hard. Iowa was penalized fifteen yards and Michigan awarded a free kick for a field



goal. The ball sailed straight between the posts.

Playing in Detroit, far from home, and before a hostile crowd, the representatives of Old Gold had piled up the largest score that any team had registered against the Maize and Blue in seven years. Generalship, alertness, speed, resourcefulness, and precision were the factors that determined the outcome of the Michigan game. The *Detroit Free Press* described the Hawkeyes in a graphic manner: "They showed magnificent education and training from the tips of their long scalp locks to the soles of their perniciously active feet. Their brains worked like greased lightning set to clock work. They were shrewder than a strategy board and could mobilize in less time than is employed in an owl's wink. When they charged it was like a bunch of wing-footed elephants, and when they tackled one of the enemy it was as the embrace of a grizzly. They could kick harder than a gray mule with years of experience, and with the accuracy of a globe-sight rifle."

The championship of the West seemed to be settled. The experienced and versatile Iowa eleven had decisively eliminated two of the strongest teams in the conference. Northwestern constituted the only serious obstacle in the way of a clean Hawkeye slate and an uncrossed goal line, but Northwestern in 1900 was a name to conjure with. The Purple team had defeated Indiana, held Illinois to a scoreless tie, and finally scored a 5 to 0 victory over their old Chicago rivals. The fact that Minnesota spoiled

Northwestern championship hopes on November 17th, while Iowa was overwhelming Grinnell, afforded no assurance that the unexpected would not happen at Rock Island on Thanksgiving Day.

On the eve of the game both teams appeared to be in the best of condition. Iowa was confident of victory and Northwestern expected to keep the score low. Toward morning of November 29th, the day of the game, several of the Iowa players who were staying at a Davenport hotel awoke with severe pain in the stomach. They were covered with large blotches and beset by a terrible dysentery. Physicians managed to get them out of bed by noon, and in this weakened condition, sick and dispirited, the Hawkeyes entered the hardest contest of the season. Faint and trembling the men returned to their places after each scrimmage and played the game to the finish—not a single substitution was made. Just before the end of the last half after Northwestern had repeatedly threatened to score, only to be repulsed by the most strenuous exertion, Brockway and Little smashed through the strong, confident Northwestern line for forty yards on a series of guards-back plays. It was one of the finest examples of sheer courage in the annals of college athletics.

The contest opened with both teams playing deliberately. Northwestern kicked off to Morton who returned fifteen yards, but the Hawkeyes had no luck in penetrating the Purple line and Warner

punted. Northwestern lined up slowly. Quarter back Hunter called the signal for a tandem smash through Eby and Warner headed by the mighty Dietz. The backs were tense as they waited for the ball to be snapped; the forwards crouched low; Hunter opened his hands and the tandem started like a snowplow. There was a shock of contact: Dietz got beyond the line but was thrown back by Eby and Morton: the referee pulled apart the tangled mass of humanity. "Second down, five yards to gain", he yelled. An off tackle buck and another tandem netted the required five yards. "Dad" Elliott, the future evangelist, skirted left end, gaining seven yards by the wide flank movement, and then Northwestern settled down to steady work. Consistent gains with their tandem advanced the ball to the Iowa thirty-five yard line where Eby broke up the play twice before it was started and Iowa took the ball on downs.

So the battle raged. The Iowans, realizing that their strength would not hold out to the end of the game, tried desperately to score. During the first half the struggle was almost entirely on Northwestern soil. The Purple warriors were forced back to their thirty-five yard line. Again and again they were thrown for a loss. Compelled to punt, their kick was blocked by Eby, but the ever present Elliott recovered on the ten yard line. Twice their tandem struck a stone wall before Johnson punted. Griffith, who had recovered from his injury at Chicago, re-

turned the compliment with interest, the ball crossing the Northwestern goal line. Again Johnson kicked and Williams, in a thrilling run that brought the spectators to their feet, followed Morton through the Northwestern team for thirty yards. But the second chance for an Iowa score went glimmering when Morton and Edson slipped in the mud on attempted end runs and Warner's place kick was blocked. Again the Hawkeyes ran the ball back within striking distance, again the ends failed to recover a punt over the Purple goal line, and again Northwestern kicked to the center of the field.

Only a few minutes of the first half remained. The Old Gold players had more than held their own but the strain was beginning to tell. Gradually Northwestern was pressing into Iowa territory. The hearts of the Hawkeye rooters were sinking within them when of a sudden they were set pounding with joy. Eby broke through the line, accepted the ball from the Northwestern quarter, and raced for the goal line nearly fifty yards away. Iowa 5, Northwestern 0. If Warner had kicked the goal the game would have been won.

The most gruelling test of the famous Hawkeye team of 1900 came in the second half of that Thanksgiving game. Weak and sick but with the score in their favor they met the powerful, confident onslaught of the well-coached Northwestern eleven. Playing low and grimly, with teeth clinched, they stemmed the Purple tide again and again. For

twenty-five minutes the battle was waged back and forth in the middle of the field. Finally Northwestern reached the Iowa twenty yard line, only to see Johnson's drop kick go wide.

Warner punted only twenty yards and a moment later Northwestern tried another goal kick with no better success than before. An off-side play gave Northwestern the ball on the Hawkeye twenty yard line. Again the Purple half back tried for a field goal, but the kick was blocked and Williams recovered the ball on the Iowa five yard line.

Only a few minutes of playing time remained. The spectators were frantic: the Iowa rooters implored the team to hold while the Northwestern crowd, exultant in the unexpected strength of the Purple team, surged out upon the gridiron yelling themselves hoarse. For a while it seemed that the Northwestern invasion had been checked. Iowa refused to give possession of the ball to their opponents by punting, and the Hawkeye tackles, by desperate efforts, gained thirty yards before the Purple line could hold for downs. It was from there that Northwestern finally kicked the goal that tied the score.

For the second consecutive season no opponent had defeated the Iowa eleven and none had crossed the Iowa goal line. That 1900 Hawkeye football team, it was generally conceded, deserved the title of intercollegiate champions of the West.

JOHN ELY BRIGGS

## The World's Series of 1891

The baseball season of 1891 was hectic and desultory. Attendance was poor. Baseball finance was close upon the rocks of bankruptcy. As the summer waned many disputes threatened to disrupt the world of organized baseball, and the future of the game seemed problematic.

In the Western Association — predecessor of the Western League — only two clubs managed to fight down internal dissension and resist the poignancy of an empty pocketbook. With grim determination, Kansas City and Sioux City struggled to finish the season. Before September the clubs representing Milwaukee, Lincoln, Duluth, and Minneapolis withdrew from the race, and soon afterward the Omaha club forfeited the remainder of its schedule to Denver and disbanded.

The final clash for the championship lay between Kansas City with a percentage of .517 and Sioux City with .542. It was agreed that the two teams should play a series of five games. To win four of these games would give the coveted pennant to Kansas City, while only two were required to cinch the trophy for Sioux City. Kansas City made a good start by winning the first game, but the second went to Sioux City, whereupon R. E. Mulcahy, secretary of the Sioux City club, informed his supporters



that "we are going to have the pennant just as sure as the sun shines and they needn't worry about the matter." He proved to be a good prophet for on September 18th the Western Association officially declared Sioux City champion. The remainder of the series was played as exhibition games.

Interest in the East centered upon the championship of the National League — the oldest and most respected organization of its kind. As the end of the season drew near it seemed certain that Chicago would win the pennant. During the last days, however, Boston won five postponed games from New York and with them first place in the league. The official percentage was Boston .630 and Chicago .607. Since this good fortune could hardly be attributed to necromancy, the partisans of Chicago were prone to charge that there had been a conspiracy to "throw" games to Boston. President James A. Hart of the Chicago club thought that New York must have shown either "downright dishonesty" or "gross incompetency" and declared his intention of leaving no stone unturned to discover the facts. An investigation was made by the directors of the National League, but nothing unsavory was found and the New York club was officially vindicated.

In the American Association — precursor of the American League — another Boston club had won the undisputed championship. Hitherto it had been customary for the leading teams of the National League and the American Association to play a post-



season series of games to decide the championship of the world. Since both of the winning teams in these leagues represented Boston in 1891, the question of superiority between the major leagues was not decided that year.

Meanwhile, however, Chicago baseball fans, undaunted by the official success of Boston, claimed championship for the Chicago Colts in the National League, and demanded an opportunity to demonstrate their prowess. The Sioux City Huskers, champions of the Western Association, were also casting about for new worlds to conquer. When baseball seemed to have come to a standstill the sport world of the West was suddenly rejuvenated on September 22nd by a telegram from President Hart stating that Chicago was willing to play "the world's series" with Sioux City. Definite terms were quickly agreed upon, and it was not long before the notion that the approaching contest was "for the world's championship" had been generally accepted. A series of six games was arranged to be played at Evans Park in Sioux City on the five days beginning with Tuesday, October 5th. The Western Association, previously overlooked in contests for the championship of the world, was at last to come into its own, and the battle was actually to be fought in the West. The fans were agog with delight.

The Huskers to play in the world's series! It was unbelievable — an unparalleled event. When it became known that the details had been arranged

Sioux City began at once to prepare for the historic contest. The whole Northwest seemed aflame with eager excitement. "Aberdeen will close the town and see the games" was the keynote of a letter from that South Dakota town, some two hundred miles away. It was expected that a special train would be required for the Chicago fans. People in Huron, Kansas City, Mason City, Cedar Rapids, Clinton, Lincoln, Omaha, Denver, and many other places wrote anxiously for particulars. W. E. Peak, passenger agent for the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad on the Iowa and Dakota division, declared that "all you can hear is baseball." The people along the railroad, he said, "want us to run special trains from every crossroad."

Marshalltown in particular was interested, for the leader of the Chicago team was Adrian Anson, who had begun his career in that city. "Old Anson" was literally worshipped by the home town fans. One enthusiastic citizen gave vent to his feelings in a letter. "Marshalltown", he wrote, "will attend the world's championship games in a body. This is the home of Anson, the only 'Anse', and we will pull for our old boy, but we like the Huskers. They belong to Iowa."

In view of the intensity of interest throughout the West, it was confidently anticipated that an unprecedented number of spectators would descend upon Sioux City for the games. Besides the world's series the corn palace festival would be at its height.

The coincidence of two such events seemed certain to attract enormous crowds. New bleachers capable of seating ten thousand people were hastily erected at the park. By eight o'clock on Saturday evening, October 3rd, two days before the initial contest, a thousand tickets had been sold.

In the meantime there was much speculation as to which team was destined to be victorious. In as much as the Huskers and Colts had neither played against the same teams nor against each other, there was no basis for comparison, but that circumstance probably only added certainty to personal opinions. Lack of definite information was no hindrance to argument. Fans of all ages, colors, and temperaments, from far and near, talked or wrote or telegraphed about the games.

With enthusiasm at such heat, it must have been a remorseless weather god indeed who greeted Sioux City on the morning of October 5th with a chilly dawn. Cold weather and baseball are incompatible. Undaunted, however, the fans received the Chicago Colts with considerable pomp. Three brass bands and sixteen hack loads of citizens formed a parade and escorted them to the park, where the procession was greeted by "a couple of thousand people" who sat shivering on the hard seats. Humor was at a discount. A Chicago player attempted to "break the ice" by capturing a donkey that was browsing at the upper end of the race course; but it was a sorry farce and barren of laughter.

It was a tense moment at 3:30 when Umpire Tim Hurst called "Batter up!" and the first game began. Would the Colts gallop roughshod over the Huskers, or would the West vanquish the East?

When the first inning ended and the score stood Sioux City 2, Chicago 0, the fans could scarcely believe their senses. It seemed incredible. But perhaps the Colts were only toying with their opponents. Still, inning after inning was chalked up without a score for Chicago. The Huskers meanwhile ran in a tally in the fourth inning, another in the fifth, and three in the sixth. Not until the seventh inning were the shivering Colts able to make a score and when the game ended the Huskers had won by a score of eight to one. Captain Anson frankly admitted that his men had been outplayed. No team on earth, he declared, could stand out against such errorless playing. But perhaps this was only a pleasantry.

The weather on the second day continued cold. It was reported that the voice of the umpire congealed before it had traveled a bat-length. "Poor Timmie! his legs cracked like pine limbs in a winter wind as he meandered back and forth between the plate and the box, and large globules of water rolled over his eyelashes". During the intervals the spectators gathered what amusement they could from the antics of a drunken policeman.

The Chicago players, however, seemed to have found an antidote for the cold which had hindered

their play in the first game. In the fifth inning, the Huskers indulged in a succession of fumbles. A newspaper reporter, frankly disappointed with the performance, wrote that "the Huskers got to throwing the ball around just as the dear children toss about the autumn leaves, and came just as near hitting each other." After the first inning fortune went steadily against the Huskers, and before they could discover the Colts' secret of keeping their hands warm the game was over. Chicago's play had stiffened. Probably Anson had been joking about the merits of the Sioux City team.

Although the games were good, the attendance was not. That bogey of baseball had already ruined several clubs in the Western Association, and now threatened the world's series. In the hope of supplying with enthusiasm the warmth which the sun had denied, considerable space in the newspapers was devoted to advertising the series. Great black letters announced that the "World's Championship Games" were being played and spectators were advised to come early in order to avoid the rush. For only fifty cents, ladies being admitted free to the grand stand, "one of the greatest [games] ever witnessed on a diamond" could be seen; and "Anson, the great and only Anson" would take part.

Captain Anson, perhaps for the gratification of his father who was present at the third game, quit his regular position at first base and put on the catcher's mit. Neither team was confident and both

were now playing with the most genuine earnestness. Chicago, determined to win, played furiously. At first the game was closely fought on both sides, but in the fourth inning a Husker failed to catch a long fly at a cost of three runs. In the seventh, the Sioux City pitcher, Meakin, made an unfortunate throw which allowed two more runs and the jig was up. The game ended with a score of nine to six for Chicago. Without doubt Captain Anson had been sarcastic in his comment.

The Huskers, however, entered the fourth game determined to "be all or nothing." The raw north wind blew with equal unpleasantness on both teams — there was that consolation. It was a battle royal. If the game should go to Chicago, Sioux City could not win more than half the series, and Anson would not consider the possibility of a seventh game. The last inning came and the struggle was not decided. It was then that Billy Earle, with "his little black bat" drove the ball quite out of sight and brought victory to the Huskers by a score of four to three. Again the games were even — two and two. It was for the future to determine whether Anson was joking or not.

In order to conciliate the goddess of fortune who had begun to smile on the Huskers, an ardent fan brought to the fifth game an Indian mascot brilliantly adorned with war paint. The Colts were intent upon retaining their laurels, and the Huskers were equally determined to add to theirs.



For five innings, while the Chicago team gained two runs, the Huskers battled on without a score. Once in the third inning with two out Sioux City got a man on the bases and tried desperately to send him home, but their efforts were of no avail. During the same inning a Chicago batter drove the ball to the right of the Husker first baseman who leaped into the air "and when he came down he held the white sphere in his upraised palm like a modern restoration of the Rhodian colossus". Later in the game "Pop" Anson crashed a hot liner that seemed to be going for a safe hit into left field, but Van Dyke made a wonderful catch. In astonishment, scarcely believing his eyes, the umpire turned to Anson. "Cap, you're out", he said, and Anson declared it was the most brilliant catch he had ever witnessed.

Thus by virtue of spectacular playing the fifth game went to Sioux City; and the series stood Chicago two, Sioux City three. It was mathematically impossible now for the Huskers to lose the series, but the final game would determine whether they would win the championship or only tie. Could it be true that "Old Anse" had meant what he said?

It was indeed a splendid exhibition of baseball that the enthusiastic crowd of four thousand people witnessed on the following day. Never was a game more hotly contested and seldom was one more replete with critical moments. From the very beginning every player exerted himself to the utmost. Strategy and alertness were at a premium. In the



initial inning a Husker reached third base, and when the batter hit safely he dashed for the home plate. There stood Anson, his hands outstretched for the ball. Summoning all his speed, the runner slid across the plate in a cloud of dust just as the ball thumped into the catcher's mit above. Down went Anson's arm like a flash as he put the ball on the prostrate Husker whose impetus had carried him beyond the base. "You're out!" yelled the umpire, who had failed to see the runner touch the plate.

Thus the contest continued. Though Sioux City took the lead, neither team could secure a permanent advantage. In the seventh inning the score was tied. Then came the crucial eighth. Again a Husker reached third base, but in an overzealous effort to score he was caught between two Colts. Just when it seemed that the game would be won, hopes were blighted. The grand stand was in an uproar. Back toward third base raced the Sioux City player, with "Pop" Anson in full pursuit. Suddenly the Husker turned, ran straight into the arms of the burly captain, and when all seemed lost he dodged past and trotted across the plate. The game was saved.

A few minutes later the world's series of 1891 came to an end. The Sioux City Huskers had "beaten the earth" by winning four of the six games played. "Pop" had not been jesting after all. Apparently no team could withstand such playing as that of the Huskers.

CHESTER H. KIRBY

## Adrian C. Anson

"An uncompromising advocate of clean sports and athletics", said K. M. Landis, speaking of Adrian Constantine Anson, the grand old man of baseball, who died on April 14, 1922. For more than twenty years "Pop" Anson, as he was more familiarly called, was captain and manager of the Chicago National League baseball team. Indeed, to him probably more than anyone else, belongs the epithet of "father of the big league".

Adrian Anson was the first white child born in Marshalltown, Iowa, and there he began his baseball career. Even as a youth in his teens he was rated as a good player on the grass lots of his home town. In 1869 he matriculated in the State University of Iowa where his chief interest seems to have centered in baseball rather than in grammar, arithmetic, history, and penmanship. He is credited with having been instrumental in establishing the earliest form of organized athletics at the University. At the time he entered college he subscribed to a declaration that it was his "intention to engage in the business of teaching in the schools of Iowa" and that his purpose in resorting to the University was to prepare himself "for the discharge of this important duty." During the year, however, he seems to have altered his ambitions for his name does not appear again in the University roster.



Underwood and Underwood

ADRIAN C. ANSON



It was in 1871 that Anson began his professional baseball career at Rockford, Illinois. Later he joined a Philadelphia team. In 1874 he was a member of a team which invaded England to play baseball and cricket. While the Americans knew very little about cricket their terrific batting offset their defects and they won every game played, including a remarkable victory over the famous Marylebone All-English eleven. The score in this game was 107 to 105 runs.

It was while Anson was playing with the Philadelphia nine that he formed a close friendship with A. G. Spalding, star pitcher on the Boston team and the best-known patron of American sport. Due in a measure to this friendship "Pop" joined Spalding's Chicago White Stockings club when the National League was formed in 1876. Experts say that there have been few stronger nines in the history of baseball. Spalding was the leader during the first year but Anson took his place as captain and manager in 1877. "Billy" Sunday also played on the team for a number of seasons.

For twenty-one years Captain Anson piloted the Chicago "Colts", as they came to be called. Five times he won the undisputed championship of the National League. He was so much of a fixture in the Chicago club for such a long time that he was dubbed "Pop" in honor of this paternal relation. After he retired in 1897 the club was for some years referred to as "Orphans", an appellation that has since changed to "Cubs".

If there have been players whose performance surpassed that of Anson for a season, certainly few if any have equaled his record over a long period. Of magnificent stature—over six feet in height and weighing nearly two hundred pounds—he kept in good physical condition. Strong and active, clear eyed and of keen perception, he had few equals as a batter. During the twenty-two years he played on the Chicago team his grand batting average was .348 per cent. For three seasons—in 1879, 1881, and 1888—he led the league in batting, and ranked second or third in other years. He seldom struck at the first ball. “I always liked to see how they were coming,” he said, “so I braced to make it appear I was going to swing without any intention of striking. I would pass the first one and sometimes the second. Then I would make ready for a blow. It is always worth a called strike or two to know how the balls are coming, and then, you know, it takes only one to line it out.”

As a fielder and base runner he merited the respect of the best of them. His regular position was at first base. In that capacity he stood at the head of the list in the National League, with a fielding average that ranged from .974 to .988 per cent.

Among those responsible for the development of the great American game, the name of Adrian Anson stands out preëminently. His professional playing began when baseball had just emerged from the old game of “rounders”. In technique the sport

owes much to his playing, but it is in morale that his greatest service was rendered. Assuming a dignity unknown among professional players of an earlier day, Captain Anson and his team repudiated the tactics of ruffians. Anson insisted that his players ride to the ball park in carriages instead of in hacks; they stayed at the best hotels; and they wore dress suits in the evening. Because of his great ability as a player, but more particularly on account of his wholesome influence "Pop" Anson is one of the most conspicuous figures in the history of baseball. He played for the love of good sport: he flourished at a time when a base hit meant more than a week's pay.

Genteel, courteous, and frank, full of appreciation for good playing, and always willing to give the opposing team a square deal, Anson earned the confidence of the members of his own team and was also held in high esteem by his opponents. He never wrangled with the umpire. Instead, he submitted his arguments in a statesmanlike manner and did not hesitate to yield a point if the decision went against him. There are instances of contesting teams withdrawing a protest, upon being assured by the venerable captain that a fair decision had been rendered. Though a strict disciplinarian, he never fretted or scolded. His clean sportsmanship, whether he received fair treatment or not, made him a favorite everywhere.

On the seventieth anniversary of his birthday, "Pop" Anson was buried in Oakland Cemetery, near



the park made famous by his playing. He used to say that he wanted the epitaph, "Here lies a man that batted .300", inscribed on his tombstone, but the world has accorded him a finer tribute. He will be known to posterity as a baseball celebrity — a man who fostered, protected, and developed the greatest of all American sports — but he will be honored most for his character and sportsmanship.

J. A. SWISHER

## Comment by the Editor

### THE PURPOSE OF PLAY

The uses of athletics are many — good, bad, and indifferent. Some people earn their living by playing ball or turning somersaults. Others, with highly developed acquisitive traits, capitalize the physical prowess of men as a method of enriching themselves. Even the colleges do it.

Athletics in mild form contribute to health, and in gentler diversions recreation is furnished. To those who lead a sedentary life physical exercise provides a wholesome safety valve for energy.

Students of social psychology declare that athletic contests satisfy the instinct for combat. The bootless pastime of abusing the umpire may have tended to keep America out of war! Team play combines the development of leadership with useful training in coöperation.

Sportsmanship — including fair play, friendly rivalry, fortitude in the face of defeat, and gracious acceptance of victory — is perhaps as important a purpose as any.

In America amateur athletics are largely confined to the schools. Paradoxical as it may seem, the opportunity for play is often responsible for keeping boys at their lessons, while in college the eligibility requirement induces many a man to study when the efforts of the most inspiring instructor would fail. Strangely enough it is by the standard of athletic

achievement that the American youth frequently selects the college where he will study mathematics, language, or law.

Athletics furnish the most potent influence in arousing the spirit of loyalty and unity that characterizes college life. Lest alumni lose that spirit they are annually enticed to a homecoming — by a football game.

For the hundreds of thousands who have filled the Coliseum, Stadium, or Bowl, who have shivered or roasted on hard plank seats, devoured peanuts, smoked tobacco, and howled at the athletes, physical exploits have always possessed peculiar fascination. The populace wants to be thrilled — and it matters but little apparently whether the spectacle is a bull fight or a ball game. The perversion of college athletics into commercial exploitation is a travesty on games played for fun.

There are people who see competitive sport chiefly as an opportunity for gambling. Always demoralizing, betting has sometimes been the cause of criminal offenses against the contestants — as when the Iowa football team was poisoned just before the final game in 1900.

Perhaps the most innocent amusement that public sports afford to lookers-on is an occasion for courtship, though it would seem that only the most sanguine would choose such a time and such a place for such a purpose.

J. E. B.

# The **PALIMPSEST**

DECEMBER 1922

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT IOWA CITY BY  
**THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA**

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

The PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

*Superintendent*

## THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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PRICE—10c per copy: \$1 per year: free to members of Society

ADDRESS—The State Historical Society Iowa City Iowa

# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN ELY BRIGGS

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VOL. III

ISSUED IN DECEMBER 1922

NO. 12

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## The Passing of Homer

Homer. What a name for a town! It seems to conjure up a vision of a well-ordered city, with close-cropped lawns and beautiful homes, churches overgrown with ivy, a good library, and modern, well-equipped schools.

All of this classical suggestiveness in the name of Homer vanishes, however, in view of the reality: five or six small houses scattered indiscriminately along the road, numerous decayed piles of wreckage that tell the tale of what was once a habitation, two wooden church buildings, and a two-story frame schoolhouse. Yonder are piles of old stones and crumbling foundations which upon closer observation appear to be the remains of two business buildings — stores of by-gone days. At the northern extremity of the town is “the store” of the present — a building of indifferent appearance devoted to the needs of casual country shoppers and the Odd Fellows lodge.

The Homer of to-day is an incarnation of the commonplace, but the ramshackle appearance of the place is in itself indicative of better days. Though at present it is a mere dot upon the surface of Iowa it has had possibilities — possibilities that are gone like “the glory that was Greece” and “the grandeur that was Rome”.

Webster County, embracing the territory formerly included in Yell and Risley counties, was established by the State legislature in January, 1853. It was not until the following fall, however, that Homer, the first county seat, was located and platted near the geographical center of the new county. Early in 1854 David Carroll built the first log house in town. It was said to be about sixteen feet square — large enough to accommodate his family and household goods. Soon afterward Granville Burkley, the first postmaster in the county, built another house, which constituted not only his dwelling, but served as a post office also. It is reported that he kept the mail in a box under his bed, and those who called were free to examine the contents for themselves. By 1856 the population of Homer amounted to approximately six hundred people.

The first postmaster, Granville Burkley, seems to have been a versatile man. He practiced law, taught school, and upon occasion he turned carpenter. It was he who erected the first schoolhouse in Homer, and whether he did not build according to the specifications — as many later contractors for school



buildings have been known to do — or whatever was wrong, the people refused to accept the building and Burkley declared that school should not be held there. No doubt sundry small boys hoped that the key would never be surrendered, but a compromise was reached and the new schoolhouse was used in the winter of 1854 and 1855:

After the General Assembly had created Webster County, an election was ordered to be held on the first Monday in April, 1853. The polls were located at the home of William Pierce, and whether his fellow voters felt so grateful to him for his hospitality or whether he had exceptional judicial capacity, at all events Mr. Pierce became the first county judge.

This election was merely to fill the county offices until the regular general election on August 1, 1853, and the records attest that the judge and treasurer received the salary of \$12.50 each for their four months' service.

The first record of Judge Pierce's official career was the issuance of a marriage license to John J. Holmes and Emily Lyon, on May 14, 1853. Holmes was a doctor over at Fort Dodge, and pretty Emily was a cousin of my father. Could Judge Pierce have foreseen the end of this ill-starred marriage, he might have felt that it was an omen of ill luck for the town. The marriage was a failure, and the fate of Homer was worse than failure — it was a tragedy.

Court was held in the schoolhouse at the new

county seat, and many an interesting session not pertaining to pedagogy must have taken place in the house of learning. As the first county attorney, Granville Burkley probably enjoyed pleading cases in the schoolhouse, the possession of whose keys he had so stoutly defended.

The district judge was C. J. McFarland — a man who evidently had a profound respect for the prerogatives of his office. There is a story current among the old-timers who knew him that one hot summer day he held court outside of the schoolhouse under the shade trees. In the midst of the session, a severe thunder storm came up suddenly, and the court attachés were about to run to shelter when Judge McFarland issued the following mandate: "God Almighty reigns above, and Judge McFarland reigns below. The business of the court will proceed!"

Far back in the early fifties Homer shone as a bright star on the western horizon. It was the best known town in northern Iowa, probably because the land office was located there. Toward this embryo city the people of the eastern States wended their way, by whatever method of locomotion was available.

A story is told of J. W. Silvers and a company of men who were en route from central Illinois to Kansas. The party had traveled as far as Mitchellville. There they stopped to dine and during the course of the meal they were told of the wonderful country to

the northwest up near Homer. The next morning Mr. Silvers and his party changed their course and in a short time reached the Boone River country. "Coming out on the prairie west of the timber we saw a sight never to be forgotten — the land covered with a luxuriant growth of grass, known as 'blue stem'. It grew tall as a man could reach. I said to the boys 'This is good enough for me'. . . . We had our pick of the land, as it all belonged to Uncle Sam, and he only wanted \$1.25 an acre for it."

A pioneer woman of Sac County journeyed with her parents from Pennsylvania, expecting to locate at Homer. An elder brother who had preceded the family had started a store there, and glowing accounts of the prospects of the town made them all anxious to reach the place. Having come as far as Rock Island by rail they were compelled to travel the rest of the way with ox teams. Bad roads and storms impeded their progress. To add to this discouragement they lost their way between Boone and Homer. While they were wondering what they should do, along came a man who advised them to go with him to Sac County. Accordingly they turned away from their original destination and, setting out with their new friend who knew the country, they settled in Sac County. Thus, while Homer was a place of sufficient prominence to attract the eastern settler, immigrants not infrequently stopped by the wayside or were guided elsewhere by circumstance.

The stage ran weekly between Des Moines and

Homer, by way of Boone. With the prairies often soaked by rain and with only trails to follow, staging was difficult and slow. Many a traveler preferred the safe method of walking to doubtful progress by stage. The mail, however, was an important item of the stage driver's load, and though passengers might be obliged to get out and walk, Uncle Sam's mail had to be carried safely across slough and stream. As late as the sixties the stage was the only recognized means of regular travel between Homer and Des Moines.

I have heard my mother relate that during the Civil War one of her cousins, whose husband was an officer in the Union army, came to visit at her home on White Fox Creek, some five miles north of Webster City. When the guest was ready to return, mother said that she and her younger brother took her to Homer in the farm wagon. They started early in the morning, drove over fifteen miles, and arrived long before the time for the stage to depart. Having seen the lady safely started on her journey, they got the mail, and drove home before dark. Only one generation ago a drive of thirty miles with a farm team and lumber wagon was counted a rare privilege!

Homerites were quite content with their populous and flourishing town in 1855. Homesteaders were coming from the East in ever increasing numbers. Fort Dodge, a frontier fort and trading post about twenty miles up the Des Moines River, had been

practically abandoned in 1853. Webster City, then indicated on the map as "Newcastle", was only a tiny settlement about ten miles across country on the Boone River. With Fort Dodge ex officio dead and the few scattered log cabins of Newcastle negligible, the future of Homer seemed assured.

About this time, however, Fort Dodge revived, boosters came, and before the inhabitants of Homer were aware of danger the land office had been removed to Fort Dodge. Many of the progressive citizens of Homer followed. What a furor it caused! From that time Fort Dodge and Homer became deadly rivals.

But even with Fort Dodge booming, well-advertised Homer still attracted settlers. Some, it is said, looked over Des Moines, traveled on, and invested in Homer town lots. About this time the firm of Snell and Butterworth started a wholesale store in Homer, speculated in land, built a mill, sold lots, and such was their wealth, coupled with shrewd business capacity, that they came near owning and conducting the town.

Just when Homer was at the height of its glory, when grand preparations were afoot for a brickyard, a wholesale grocery establishment, and other municipal projects, there came another note of warning from Fort Dodge. It was no less a proposition than to remove the county seat from Homer to Fort Dodge. The people of Homer were amazed at the preposterous notion. Had there been a political

Napoleon in Webster County to swoop down upon the Fort Dodge forces and keep them separated from those of Newcastle, the whole history of that section of the State might have been changed. As it was, Fort Dodge and Newcastle united on the issue and the seat of government was transferred to Fort Dodge. It might be added that in all probability the two towns have never been harmonious since.

Elderly pioneers, who as small boys helped stuff the ballot boxes in the election on the removal of the county seat, assert that there is some truth in the legend concerning a famous wrestling match which formed a sequel to the county seat contest. One version has it that Attorney John D. Maxwell of Homer accused the Fort Dodge faction of corrupt practices in the election. Thereupon John F. Duncombe, prime booster for Fort Dodge and future father-in-law of William S. Kenyon, returned the charge and accepted a challenge to wrestle it out. Maxwell was tall, sinewy, and powerful while Duncombe was skilled in the technique of wrestling. No one remembers the details of the contest but there seems to be no doubt that Duncombe came out on top. He lived to see Fort Dodge become one of the important cities of the State. As for Maxwell, it is related that he recognized the significance of his defeat, "spit on his fire, called his dog," and moved to Newcastle where he became a prominent figure.

Meanwhile the village of Newcastle grew, and adopted the more ambitious name of Webster City.

Within a year from the time that Fort Dodge became the county seat of Webster County the State legislature created Hamilton County and, quite overlooking the pride and claims of Homer — a former county seat — designated Webster City as the seat of justice. Poor broken remnant of a village of classical name. Well might it cry, “O tempora, O mores!”

Finally, climax of catastrophies, the railroad went through Webster City and Fort Dodge. Stranded, ten miles from the railroad, its business gone and its citizens leaving, Homer simply shriveled up. Year by year it has decayed and disintegrated until now — a few scattered houses, a group of old tumble down buildings, a wooden schoolhouse — these are all that remain. Homer, its early visions of greatness gone (there is not even a Standard Oil station in town), is just a bit of wreckage on the historical horizon.

BESSIE L. LYON



## Pilot Grove

During the Illinoian glaciation the present channel of the Mississippi River was obstructed by ice. Its waters were diverted from their natural course and swept southward along the western boundary of Henry County through the present valleys of the Skunk River and Big Cedar Creek, thence southeast up the channel of Little Cedar Creek, and across the prairies of southern Henry and northern Lee counties to the valley of Sugar Creek, whence the Mississippi returned to its former course below the present site of Fort Madison.

Where this stream passed over the prairies between Little Cedar and Sugar creeks, it excavated a wide channel now known as the Grand Valley. A branch of this valley heads in the eastern part of Marion Township in Lee County and extends westward to the middle of the township. There it turns south and connects with the Grand Valley. On the promontory partially encompassed by this crescent valley is the site of the once prosperous village of Pilot Grove.

The name Pilot Grove is significant. On the crest of the promontory, far removed from any forest growth, was a beautiful grove of elm trees. In the midst of this grove stood a giant elm, a veritable

monarch, towering above the stately trees that surrounded it. This grove could be seen for many miles across the prairies and served as a guide to the pioneer who journeyed over the plains to seek a home nearer to the setting sun. Hence the name of Pilot Grove. Many early settlers were guided to their destination by this friendly and unerring pilot.

Perhaps the first white man to discover this noted landmark was Alexander Cruikshank, a worthy pioneer of 1834. The discovery of the grove can best be told in the language of his son, J. P. Cruikshank of Fort Madison:

“My father on March the fourth 1834 procured a canoe at the town of Commerce, now Nauvoo, Illinois, and took aboard a few personal effects and provisions. Being a sailor of fifteen years experience, he readily rigged up a mast and using a blanket for a sail, he easily sailed up the river eight miles, landing at the site of Old Fort Madison, marked by two of the old stone chimneys, the barracks having been destroyed by fire over twenty years before. There were two or three cabins at the landing, occupied by settlers, some of whom had made settlement before the country was opened for that purpose, and had been removed a year previously by government dragoons. Remaining over night at the fort, my father the next morning boldly started for the interior wilderness, afoot and alone, selecting a site for his future home in a point of timber jutting into the windswept prairies on the headwaters of Sutton

Creek, fifteen miles northwest of the old fort and about three miles south of the present village of Lowell on Skunk River.

“My father being unsatisfied with his location, began after he had planted his small crop to reconnoiter for one where the soil was more fertile and the water facilities better. He had learned from an Indian who had stopped over night at his cabin of a fine spring of water about seven miles southwest. Taking my father to a high point on the prairies nearby he pointed in the direction of the spring and to a grove that stood boldly out on the prairie about five miles due west. Four miles to the south the Indian called his attention to a high point of timber (the site of the present town of West Point). By means of broken English, signs, grunts and gestures in which an Indian is past master in making himself understood, he made it clear to my father that in order to find the spring he must follow the course pointed out, keeping the elm grove to the right and the point of timber to the left, about equally distant from the course line; after crossing Big Sugar Creek, he would see another grove or point of timber ahead, where he would find the flowing spring.

“Not long after this occurrence father started in quest of what he feared might turn out to be another fabled fountain of youth with which the Indians lured the early Spanish adventurers. . . . The land on which the elm grove stood is about the highest point in Lee county, and could be seen for miles

around. Keeping the grove to the right and crossing Sugar Creek at a point now known as Pilot Grove station, my father found the spring in the edge of the point of timber just as the Indian had described. Here father made his second claim, on which he built another cabin on the exact site now enclosed and known as the Clay Grove or Howard cemetery, where he, my mother and other members of the family lie buried.”

From that time on the high elm grove became generally known as Pilot Grove. The early settlers’ trail from Fort Madison to the Aaron Street settlement at Salem and the trail from Burlington to a settlement on the Des Moines River crossed at or near Pilot Grove. Long before the advent of the white men the aborigines used this grove as a guide.

Iowa settlers were not slow in discovering the beauties of such locations and their natural advantages for the founding of villages. Jonathan Jones, an enterprising and thrifty pioneer, claimed the land on the promontory in 1837 and acquired title to the same in 1840. At this early date, when all around was a trackless plain, Mr. Jones was imbued with the idea of founding a town. He planted a grove of black locust trees in the form of a square, the trees being arranged in regular order, and he enclosed this grove with a fence of elaborate design. Near the grove he set apart a plot of land for a cemetery and there Mrs. Jones was the first to be buried. In 1851 the government established a postoffice, giving it the

name of Pilot Grove and Jonathan Jones became the first postmaster. Attracted by the beauty of the location and the richness of the surrounding prairie many settlers established their homes nearby. On March 20, 1858, the town was regularly laid out and platted by George Berry, deputy county surveyor. This plat is on section 10, township 69, range 6. The platting was approved by J. A. Goodrich, acting county judge, and was filed in the office of the county recorder on April 16, 1858.

The town grew rapidly: George H. Moon and son opened a store for general merchandise, E. B. Ringland soon followed with a dry goods store, Townsend Hubb established a shop for the manufacture of wagons, buggies, and farm implements, and Enos Neal set up as a blacksmith. Schools and churches were established and Pilot Grove became the community center for the surrounding country. The park with its ample grove of shade trees furnished a delightful place for all outdoor meetings. Here the Fourth of July was celebrated in real pioneer fashion. Speakers of note fired hot oratorical shot into British tyranny and lauded the virtues of the American patriots.

Pilot Grove was the focus of the intellectual activities of the surrounding communities. Literary societies were organized where the younger generations practiced the art of elocution, and local orators discussed many problems of government and philosophy in the forum of debate.

In ante-bellum days, Professor Belding, an elocutionist and reader of considerable ability, conducted schools of elocution at Salem, Chestnut Hill, Lowell, Pilot Grove, Dover, and other points. At the close of these schools a grand contest for championship was to be held. No more fitting place could be found for such a gathering than the public park of Pilot Grove. Great interest was manifested in these exercises. The day set for this occasion proved to be ideal and people from the surrounding country came to the park in large numbers. The audience was estimated to have included from six hundred to a thousand people. Judge John Van Valkenburg of Fort Madison, Joel C. Garretson of Henry County, and Joseph D. Hoag of Chestnut Hill were chosen as judges of the contest. The audience was highly entertained and the honors were fairly distributed. Miss Lizzie Mitchell of Salem received first prize. Her selection was "Hiawatha". "Regulus", rendered by Caleb Weir of Pilot Grove, was given second place. Lydia Ellen Townsend, also of Pilot Grove, received third place. Miss Lizzie Wiggins of Salem was given the premium for making the best appearance on the platform. She spoke Poe's "Raven". John E. Mitchell and Miss Sue Wiggins received honorable mention.

The population of Pilot Grove never exceeded three hundred people, but its importance as a community center was out of proportion to its population. Here the farmers for miles around received



their mail, went to church, talked politics, did their trading, and found a market for the stock and produce of the farm.

Four church organizations were maintained in the town: Baptist, Presbyterian, Friends, and Universalist. Only two church buildings were erected, however — Baptist and Quaker. The Presbyterians held their services in the Baptist church while the Universalists occupied the public hall. The town was well supplied with ministers. Samuel Pickard and Zehn Leweling taught that immersion was essential to salvation. Reverend McNight preached the time-honored doctrine of election, while at the head of the Quaker meeting sat Ephraim B. Ratliff who on occasion when the spirit moved him to utterance proclaimed the glad tidings of peace on earth and good will to men. Joshua Hicks and Joel C. Garretson believed that as Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost He would through God's infinite love finally restore the whole family of mankind to holiness and happiness. Thus the various phases of religious thought had their adherents and devoted champions.

Pilot Grove also presented a field for political activity. In the ever memorable campaign of 1860 the picturesque "Wide-awakes" from various towns with their oil cloth caps and capes and their greasy lamps marched and countermarched. Here also the followers of the "Little Giant", their hickory clubs bedecked with ribbons of the national colors, gave



their spectacular parades, while venders of refreshments openly sold "Douglas whiskey" and cider to the thirsty throng. No political campaign was complete without a grand rally at Pilot Grove .

During the Civil War the political feeling was very intense. An anecdote will illustrate the spirit of the times. One evening in the fall of 1862 several hundred men had gathered at the schoolhouse to listen to orators from Keokuk uphold the Union cause and hear the glee club from Fort Madison sing the war songs of the hour. After the meeting was over and the men had assembled in the yard one enthusiastic citizen drew a pistol from his pocket and fired at random in the air. This seemed to be a signal for in a moment the place resounded with pistol shots from the whole assembly. It seemed as if every man was armed and ready for immediate action should occasion arise.

About 1867 a high school was established and Professor Morrison instructed the youth in the higher branches of learning. Morrison was followed by Eli Beard of sainted memory. Beard was an educator of wide experience and was much beloved by his pupils. A monument erected to his memory at Milo, Iowa, by his former pupils stands a witness to the love and esteem in which he was held. In 1871 the schoolhouse was destroyed by a tornado. The enterprising citizens soon replaced the structure with a more commodious building and the high school was again opened with C. M. Frazier and Belle Coleman

Frazier, his wife, as instructors. The school prospered for a time but the citizenship of the surrounding country changed and the school was finally closed. Frazier entered the law and afterwards became Attorney General of Arizona.

The town of Pilot Grove was also doomed. Two causes contributed directly to its decline. About two and one-half miles southeast a settlement of German Catholics was established about the village of St. Paul. These Germans were an industrious and frugal people. They rapidly extended their holdings and soon absorbed the surrounding land. The interests of these people were not at Pilot Grove but were centered in the village and church of St. Paul. The children were sent to the parochial school and public education was abandoned.

Pilot Grove had flourished without a railroad. In 1880 a branch of the Burlington road was constructed from Keokuk to Mt. Pleasant, passing four miles to the westward. A few years later another branch of the Burlington extending from Fort Madison to Ottumwa was located two miles south of the village—the final cause that ended the career of Pilot Grove. The trade of the country was naturally diverted to the shipping points on these roads, and Pilot Grove was left without adequate financial support. To add insult to injury a station on the Ottumwa line now bears the name of Pilot Grove.

To-day the original village is no more: the buildings have long since been wrecked, and the streets

and alleys have become a part of the adjacent farms. The public park — the one time pride of the village — is unenclosed and only a few straggling and ragged trees remain to tell the glories of the past. The historic and stately elms that played such an important part in the days of the pioneers have succumbed to the ruthless hand of utility. This beauty spot of nature, once vibrant with life and energy, is as silent to-day as it was when the stranger guided his footsteps by the lofty pilot of the plains.

O. A. GARRETSON

## Comment by the Editor

### A COMMONWEALTH OF VILLAGERS

Napoleon's contemptuous remark that England was "a nation of shopkeepers" might be legitimately paraphrased "a nation of villagers". Indeed, the same might be said of America. Iowa in particular is a commonwealth of villages — and therein lies the glory of the State, an explanation of its loyal spirit.

Most of us live in or near small towns. If it were not so the uncanny realism of "The Days of Real Sport" would lose its universal appeal.

The notion seems to be prevalent that village life implies inevitable, unmitigated narrowness. It is true that people who live apart are inclined to be provincial, but that is equally true of city dwellers.

Small town society may be unsophisticated, but it is not entirely simple and shallow and drab. Human existence may be complex without being dramatic, commonplace without being dull. To be sure there are bumpkins in villages: the same type of person is a cad in the city. Of the world's greatest thinkers the village has furnished more than its share because it breeds leadership.

## THE VILLAGE IN LITERATURE

Ever since the time of *Piers Plowman* village taverns, spires, and cottages have figured in English literature. In the modern era Goldsmith, pleading the cause of the gentle, kindly folk of sweet Auburn, put the essence of all community life into his *Deserted Village*. Crabbe told of the hopeless wretchedness of the people of Aldeburgh — a surly, joyless, unlovely race akin to the place they lived in. The artistry, freshness, and fidelity of Mary Mitford's sketches of *Our Village* have never been excelled, while Mrs. Gaskell contrasts the naïve, individualistic inhabitants of untroubled *Cranford* with the growing industrialism of the cities.

The typical American village has never been described. Perhaps there is no single type. Much has been written about New England towns; the uncouth, ephemeral frontier posts and mining camps continue to live in Bret Harte's stories and Joaquin Miller's poems; Mark Twain, Octave Thanet, and Zona Gale have immortalized midwestern small town life.

While American literature contains no village epic, the villagers, wherever the scene may be laid, seem to be endowed with common traits. Such homely virtues as honesty, contentment, industry, reverence, tranquility, and strength are usually revealed. But all American villages are not replicas of Longfellow's idyllic Grand-Pré where the "dwell-

ings were open as day and the hearts of the owners'' and where ''the richest was poor, and the poorest lived in abundance''. Villagers, being human, have their faults. They live by the standards they know — and in general those standards have met with approval.

A profound change seems to be reflected in the literature of to-day. People who live in small towns are treated contemptuously or with pity. Their lot is depicted as sordid and monotonous — and theirs is the fault. Has the character of the village changed? Have the sturdy virtues of the ''village smithy'' been supplanted by the sophistication of the garage tinker? Is the modern American village really decadent, insufferable, inhabited by dullards? Or is this interpretation confined to the imagination of urban sophists who do not see and can not understand?

J. E. B.

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